



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

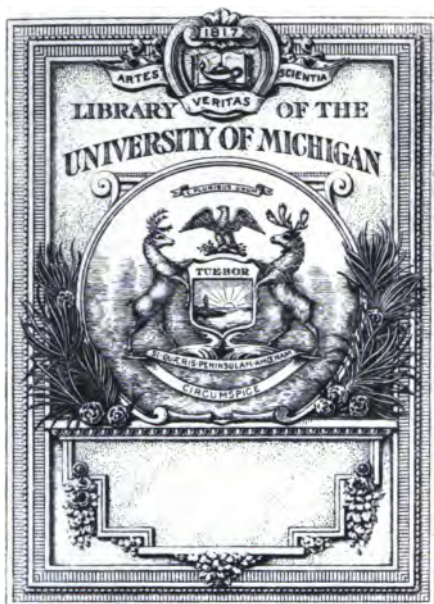
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

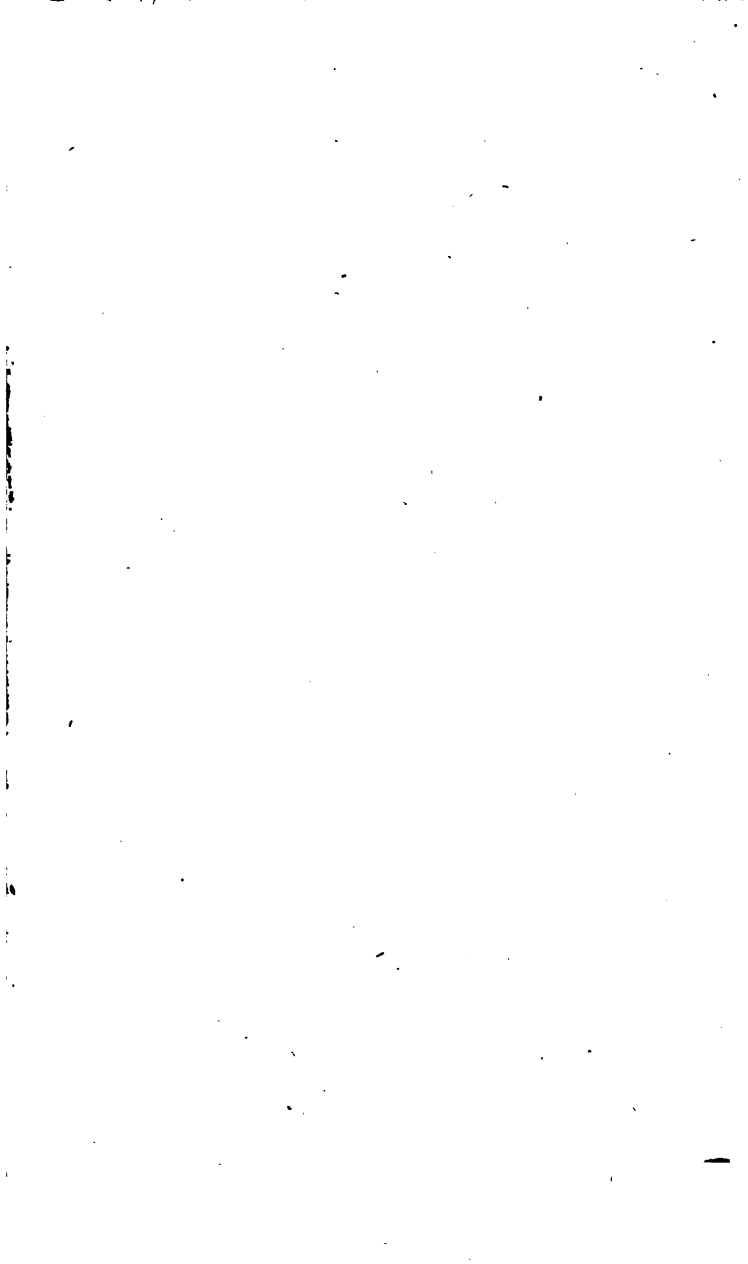
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

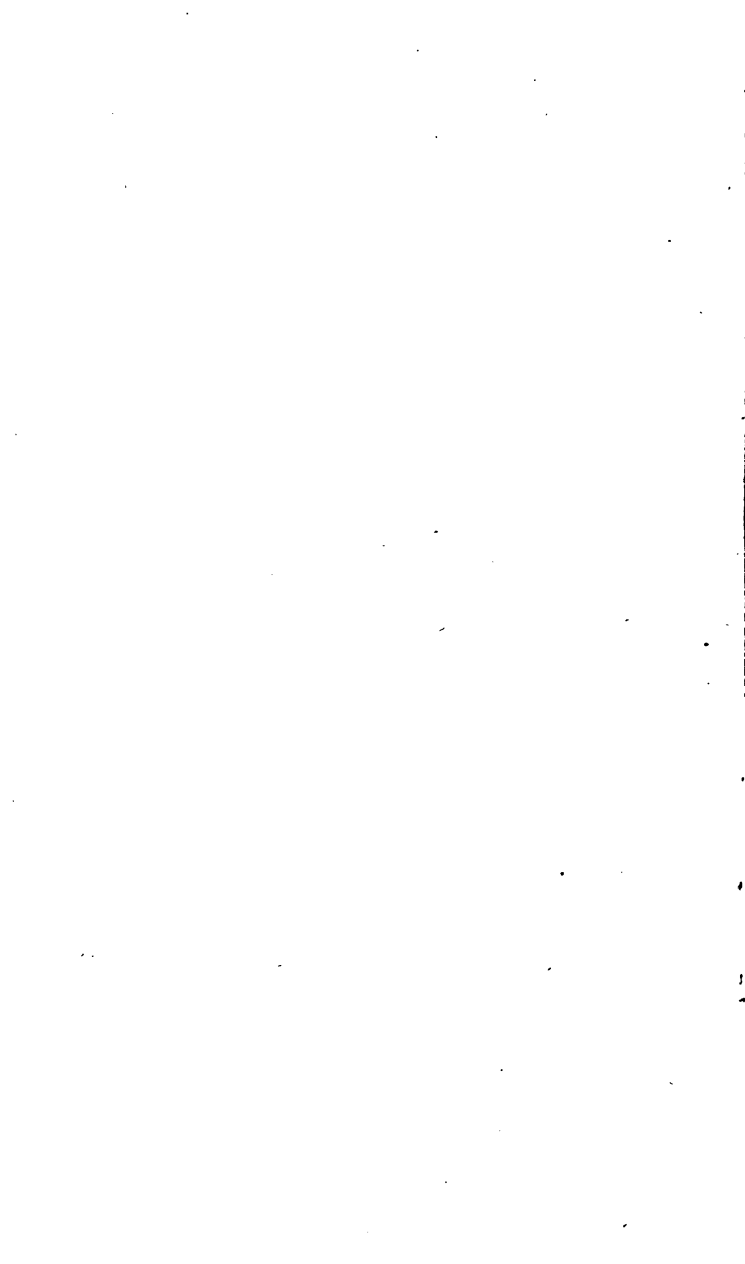
### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

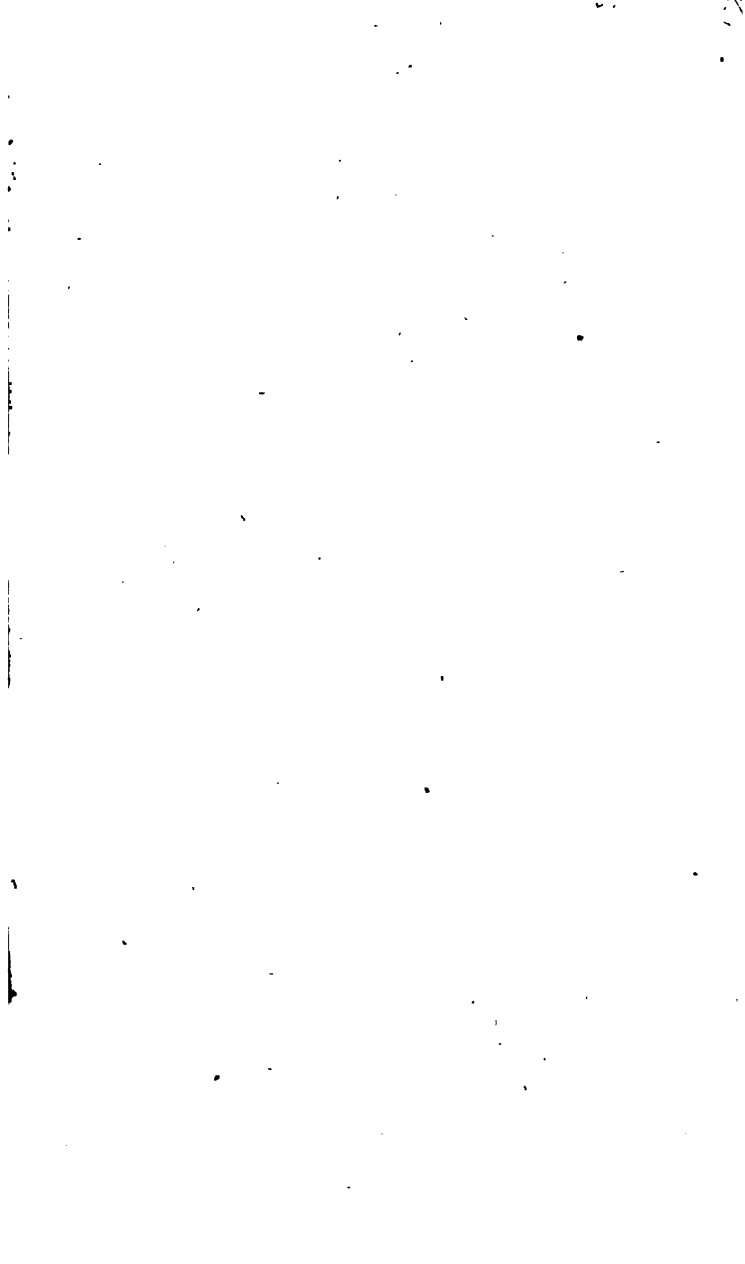


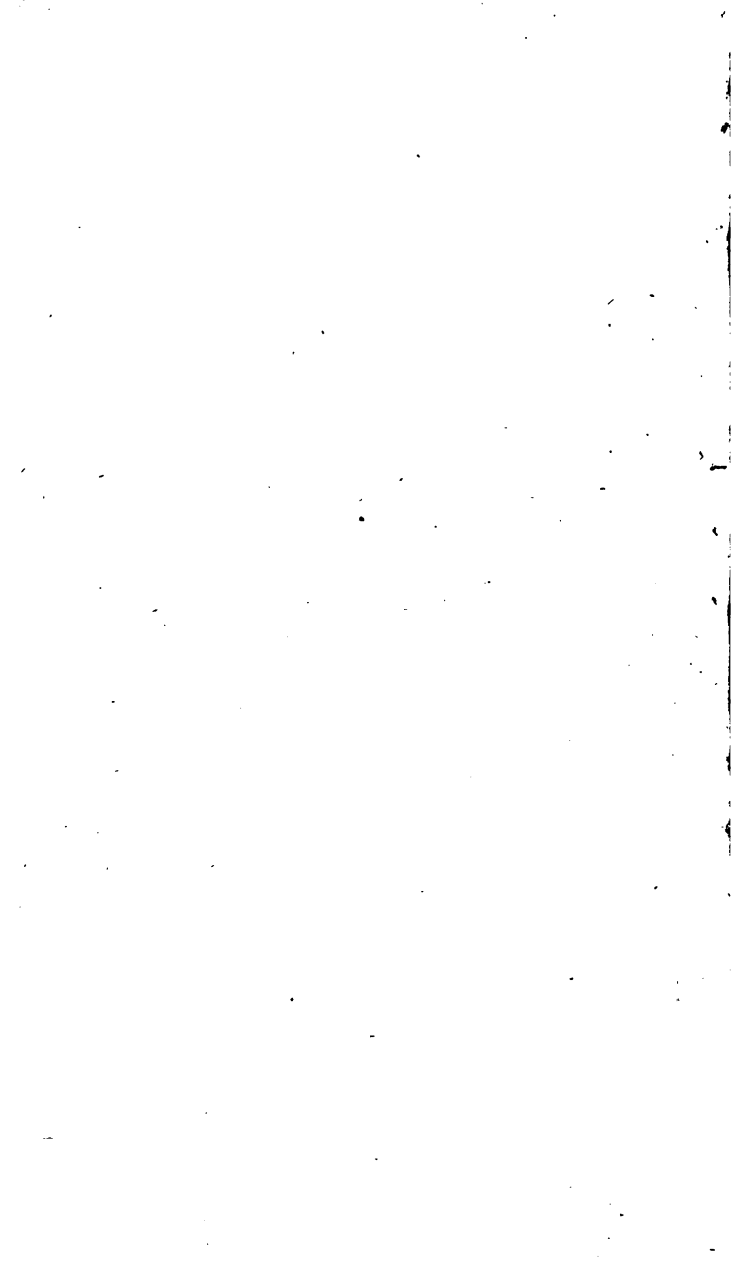
Gift of  
Rowland C. Stebbins











*Vorac, Claude Joseph*

CHEVALIER

DE

V E R S E N A I,

A *Novel*,

IN TWO VOLUMES,

TRANSLATED

FROM THE FRENCH OF MAD. COTTIN,

Author of "Elizabeth, or, The Exiles of Siberia ;"  
&c. &c.

---

---

VOL. II.

---

---

London :

PRINTED FOR J. F. HUGHES, 15, PATERNOSTER-ROW

*By J. D. Demick, 46, Barbican.*

---

1810

848

D694ch

t

1810

v. 2

*Gift  
Lucas and C. Stephens  
9-22-44*

# VERSENAL.

---

## LETTER LXIII.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

**W**ILL you again say that I think not of you? Very well, you have prevailed; yes, here it is, the representation of a woman whose courage appears to you supernatural, but whose heart, alas! is very weak! May it fully content your wishes! may you attach such a price to the gift I now make you, as will prevent your desiring any other! Ah! at least, let this present of a love the most tender prove to you to what

an excess you are dear to me, the extent of my confidence in you, and my ready acquiescence with your demands in all I can grant without remorse ! I love you—I have told you so—I write to you incessantly—I give you my picture—in short, I do nothing which should not convey a self-reproach, and yet I applaud myself; alas ! for what? for not having been guilty of the greatest transgressions. It comes merely to this, that courage which so chagrins and astonishes you, which costs me so much, and which, fairly appreciated, is nothing more than weakness. Ah ! assure me that you will have gratitude enough never to exact more, never ! My God ! the petitions of a lover who is dear, dear as you are to me, are but the mandates of tyranny. Remove my fears; say that I shall have nothing to alarm me, that I may enjoy the pleasure of seeing you without alloy. Let my portrait, in

reminding you of the nature of the sentiment which attaches me to you, be at once a pledge of that sentiment and my security. I pass my life in fearing what might contribute to your happiness; in reproaching myself for my involuntary sensations; in resolves accordant with my duty, and in wishing perhaps the contrary. Are these the sweets of love which you promised me? 'Love,' you said, 'and we shall be happy.' happy! ah! yes, I am, if you are so; if your love be as tender, as sincere as it appears to be; yes, although it has robbed me of repose, of peace of mind, of all that was most precious to me, I regret nothing, not even that liberty of which I was so tenacious, and which is fled, past recall.

## LETTER LXIV.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME DE  
SENANGES.

AM I awake? can this be reality?  
It is she! yes, it is that adored resemblance! that treasure for which my heart panted! that pledge, beyond all price, of a love which constitutes my whole happiness! . . . . Alas! how far has the painter fallen short of his model! Here are some of your features, but the soul that informs them, where is that? where is the expression, the animation? Ah! how inadequate is the pencil's power to pourtray those inexpressible graces which the mind gives, the imagination multiplies, and which is the perfection of sensibility! I hold you, yet I seek you still! No matter:



what is wanting to the picture my heart can supply.

*May you (it is you who speak) attach such a price to the gift I now make you, as will prevent your desiring any other!*

How much injustice you do me! It is not privations which I dread; in the same degree that they add to your happiness, I shall suffer, uncomplaining, all that they take from mine; but, cruel as you are, would you domineer over the involuntary emotions of the soul? would you attempt to bind in chains that fire which blazes there with devouring strength, and which is only augmented by the efforts used to extinguish it? To form the lover of your choice, love itself must me annihilated.

What I have said is not meant as a satire on your system; I find it barbarous, unjust perhaps, yet still I respect it; it is not the fruits of caprice, it is the work of virtue; and each time that

it acts, only against me, you may be sure of the sacrifice : my life is your's. Ah ! what would be my triumph, if, at the price of your tears ? I could not enjoy a felicity which would draw forth your sighs ; I would not steal from weakness what the vile would dispute, what the heart would not grant me ; I would rather ever suffer, yes, ever, than merit a reproach by a temerity inconsistent with delicacy, by transports which humble when not participated. But in bringing myself to this mode of loving, believe not I am more tranquil, less perturbed, less fastidious : the cravings of the heart multiply in the same proportion as we take from the indulgence of the senses ; love would lose nothing ; there is no privation which should not be compensated by an enjoyment. What you deprive me of on one side, you must give me back on the other ; the fewer proofs I exact, the

more I shall expect to be recompensed by sentiments ; and you should love me more in proportion as you make me less happy.

## LETTER LXV.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME DE  
SENANGES.

HEAVENS ! what is it I feel ? What rebellious ardor is this which burns in my veins, and there mingles with the vital stream that feeds my heart ? From whence this cloud which overspreads my eyes, and hides from them all except your charms ? I cannot recal those to my imagination, without a perturbation at once cruel and delirious ; they tyrannize over my thoughts, they [are ever present to my heart ; and when I tear myself from your sight, I carry with me their impression and my pu-

nishment ; yes, I repeat it, my punishment ! My days, my nights, each moment of my life, is marked by painful agitations, by the torments of a love I am obliged to restrain, and which still springs up afresh to be again sacrificed to you. Even dreams the most sweet are but rays of light which quickly disappear, and serve only to plunge me still deeper in misery : a barbarous reality makes me expiate the very visions of my slumbers ; and perhaps you would wish to snatch from me even these phantoms of my imagination.—Oh ! if you knew all I suffer ; if you knew how many secret tears, how many burning sighs, add to the inhuman triumph which destroys me, and on which perhaps you applaud yourself !—What have I promised ? O God ! what a horrid vow ! Shall I have strength to keep it ? What a conspiracy have we entered into against the rights of nature and of love !

In vain I endeavor to encourage myself in fulfilling the odious engagement; I sigh, in spite of myself, for the moment of perjury. Ah, pardon!—I wander—I offend you—I detest myself;—but hear me, and be you the judge. Call to mind our last interview: you desired I should read to you a work which had just been published, but from a degree of distraction, alas! as natural as pardonable, my eyes wandered to your face; they fixed there with an expression of tenderness which spoke my whole soul, and the book fell from my hand, nor had I power again to take it up! After a moment of silence—ah, how expressive!—I threw myself at your feet, and took one of your hands, which I bathed with my tears: my agitation increased; and, impelled by an emotion of which I was no longer master, I pressed you to my heart, which felt as if it would open to receive you.

It was then that your eyes, those eyes but a moment before so kind, so soft, became armed with severity ; you envy me even the innocent expression of a passion, of which however you accept the homage, and condemn its excess, which alone prevents its being a crime. Cruel woman ! forbid then my heart to palpitate with love in your presence ! forbid your looks to add each moment to that flame which my respect keeps there confined, but which blazes with more violence when irritated by obstacle !

Why do all your motions seem directed by the graces, and inspire voluptuous rapture ? Why does your breath dispense such sweets to the lover who approaches you ? Why do your lips so fresh seem to invite the kiss which so affrights them ? If you will impose upon me so many restrictions, why are you thus decked with every charm ?—Must then my torments spring

up in the very bosom of delight? And must I, in approaching you, arm myself with precautions against the transports of my soul, the indulgence of my eyes, and even the wandering of a thought? You kindle desires only to exact the sacrifice of them: all the effects of love, which become sacred from their cause, all the emotions of the heart, of which the senses are the interpreters, all the tributes of sensibility appear so many crimes to you; and when I am only the most tenderly enamored of men, you think me the most guilty!—Yet you believe you love me!—No; you deceive yourself; without doubt you do.—Recal the confession which has cost you so much—but, what do I say? Ah! beware of giving credit to my expressions; pity the distraction of my soul; and leave me your love, should I even die of my torments!

## LETTER LXVI.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

I EXPECTED too much of you—but at length I must take that part more dreadful to me than death. I will avoid you—It must be so—I feel it must—Ah! cruel as you are, why have you forced me to it? All is over—I renounce happiness—life—you!—I shall no longer pass my days in wishing for—in expecting—in seeing you. My eyes no more shall meet your's, and my heart, that heart so sincere, that heart which you doubt, whilst its every chord vibrates with love the most tender, that heart which is nothing in your eyes, unless infamy accompanies the gift, made miserable by you beyond hopes of cure, will ever preserve a dear remembrance,



a painful regret of that happiness which it must forego. I deceived myself, alas ! I sought to do so. I dared depend enough on you and on myself to console me for a confession, of which the delicacy of your sentiments veiled from me the peril and the crime. Vain chimeras of a heart misled ! they are vanished all. But I am the cause of your suffering ; I cannot support that idea ; doubtless I possess courage, and, would the punishment turn from the object of my love, were the torture all my own, I could summon fortitude to bear it ; but your anguish is dreadful to me : it is only by flying you that it will be possible for me to hold out against it. What reproaches did you make me the last time we met ! what a letter have you written me to-day ! Pity, without hating me, without persecuting me further. It is become my duty to pull from your eyes the bandage which has

but too well concealed my failings from you ; see me such as I really am, and you will not believe my loss irreparable. You were happy before you knew me, and you will be so, alas ! again, without me.—There are many women more captivating, none who would love you so well ; but, by granting you more, they will better suit your ideas of a real attachment. You will love—you will be beloved—you will forget me :—I would have it so ; forget me, leave me to my fate, and I shall with joy purchase your tranquillity at the expence of my life. Ah ! can I any longer prize it ? no ; it is become hateful to me. I tear myself from the object from whom I should wish never to be separated. I have no longer any thing to fear, any thing to regret.

Fame, thou imaginary good, duties too severely rigid, prejudices which I abhor, yet respect—you deprive me of

my lover ! it is to you that I this day sacrifice much more than my own existence.—No, never should I have summoned resolution for the task, had I not yesterday seen that sentiments the most tender, and of which I had given you proofs so sincere, contributed much more to your torment than your felicity. My fortitude forsakes me. Never have I loved you so much as at this moment ; and if I add another word, perhaps it will be to——No, I will not.—We must see each other no more.—Adieu !

## LETTER LXVII.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME DE  
SENANGES.

WHAT a dreadful certainty did I awake to, in reading your letter ! A universal trembling seized me, and I should have wished that moment to be my last,

could I but have pressed your hand to my lips, read my pardon in your eyes, and carried with me the certainty of being still beloved.—You will avoid me! see me no more!—Heavens! have you been able to form such a resolution?—A dagger's wound would have been less sensibly felt by my heart than such a sentence.—This then is the felicity I had hoped for from love the most tender! All must be renounced—We must fly each other!—the word alone inflicts pangs beyond endurance. Ah! would you could hear the sobs, the groans of a heart which you have filled with anguish—I fall at your feet. My generous, my adorable friend, if yet a spark of love remains in that bosom—What would I say?—If pity still speaks to you in my favor, pardon me, pardon reproaches which I abhor, for which I blush, of which I am the victim.—Love me still—abandon me never.—I swear

to you in this moment, rendered sacred by grief, in this moment of tears, of agony, of despair, to make it my eternal study to force you to forget the crime, but too excusable, alas ! of my delirium and your charms. I will appease you by my sacrifices : they will not be painful to me ; no, again I swear they will not ; accept my oaths, my repentance.—

Overwhelm me not with your rigor, give me not over to my own gloomy imagination. If you are inflexible, I go, I fly to entomb myself in some dreary wilderness.—I have lost my reason ; I no longer know myself, or any of the objects which surround me.—Would you drive me to total madness ? —Must I date my delirium from the day in which I became intoxicated with love for you ? Alas ! I am sufficiently punished for having dared to look up to perfection ; and even you, cruel as you •

are, you would yourself confess, were you now to behold me, that I have atoned but too severely for my presumption. Write to me, I conjure you ; permit me to go instantly and throw myself at your feet, or you will in your turn become guilty. I must pronounce you barbarous if you deny me your pity, your love, at the moment I merit it the most. Beware of interdicting me your presence ; there only is my life. My transgression has enlightened my mind, purified my heart.—That heart will be henceforth delicate, disinterested, worthy of you. Hate, despise me, if I keep not my promise. You whom I worship, whom I deify, fear not I shall want courage : the excess of my passion will sustain me, will give me fortitude to suffer, or rather it will suffice for my happiness.

I await your answer—it will decide my fate—reflect well on that—I trem-

ble.—The moments will appear ages.—  
Adieu.—Alas ! must it be for ever?—I  
can no more ; the faintness of death  
has seized my whole frame, and my  
tears flow so fast I can no longer distin-  
guish what I write.

### BILLET.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

ALAS ! no, I am not barbarous. Your  
grief, your letter, your promises have  
prevailed—I yield to them—I will see  
you.—Ah ! can I afflict you ? Think  
of your oaths ; my heart accepts them ;  
it dares depend on them. My situation  
is equally distressing with your's.—I  
love you more than life—I will see you  
to-day—yes, I will see you—I consent  
to it.—Ah, God ! resist your tears !—  
How can I ?—

## BILLET

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER,

Ah ! pity me ! I am obliged to go into the country to pass some days at the Chateau de \*\*\*, with my relation, Madame de \*\*\*. I go to see her every year about the latter end of September ; it is a duty I cannot dispense with myself from performing. Attempt not to persuade me to do so. I quit you, alas !—You are but too well avenged for what you termed my cruelty.



## LETTER LXVIII.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

ON my arrival here I found nobody at home; all had gone out on their morning excursions. I passed two hours in reading over your letters, in thinking of you, and awaited without impatience the return of many persons who are at present, as myself, inhabitants of this mansion.

How happy are all the women whom I see around me! I think so at least, they seem blest with indifference; nothing disturbs their repose; their days are serene, their nights tranquil; they enjoy the passing hours; whilst I, in the forest's gloom, as amidst the tumult of Paris, am ever the same. The calm of the country communicates itself not to

my heart. There is but one pleasure, one good, one felicity for me ; my eyes cannot even distinguish any other.

I wandered yesterday into the recesses of a wood, where the light scarcely penetrated ; it seemed inaccessible to all but love. Your image, which my heart carried with me, embellished the spot. I sighed for your absence ; yet, in spite of, what was wanting to the scene, I enjoyed it to luxury. The silence, the obscurity of the place, a rivulet, whose murmurs invited to meditation ; every thing seemed collected to charm even indifference, and to fill with enthusiasm those who were no longer so. I remained rivetted to the bank where I had seated myself, without the power to quit it ; and there had I staid till now, I believe, had not some of the company come and dragged me from it : but still all this is nothing without a beloved object to whom to im-

part the emotions it inspires. Whilst others admire, I only regret. For me, nature may exert more powerful efforts, become more gay, more rich in beauties, display more wonders to the admiring universe, to me she need give but my lover.

## LETTER LXIX.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME DE  
SENANGES.

At length you are returned! again I live!  
The air which surrounds me is less necessary to my existence than your presence.  
Will you keep your word with me?  
Shall we execute the charming project we had formed before your departure?  
How many things have I to say to you!  
I have received letters from Madame d'Ercy; I will shew you them. She has already discarded the Marquis, and

seems to wish for nothing more than to recal me. You may judge what effect this fancy has on me. She is outrageous against you ; she breathes nothing but menaces and vows to pursue you till the last moment of her existence. The character of this woman shocks me ; but dread nothing from it. I will watch her steps, and am at no loss for means to shelter you from her malice. I do not even believe she means as she speaks. The Marquis is set out for the army, with the Mareschal de \*\*\*, his uncle ; we shall be no longer embarrassed by him. What beings ! Let us forget them, and think only of our love. Remember what you have promised me. I fly then once more to behold you !

LETTER LXX.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

WELL then, come, my dear Chevalier, come to-night and sup with me: we shall be alone; you wish it so. I have reflected, and consent to it. I find in my inmost heart all that can assure me of the rectitude of your's; and in the sacrifice of a vain chimera of decorum, the sweetest of pleasures. My love is pure, your's not less virtuous; my conscience is tranquil, it reposes in the bosom of honor. I am under the safe-guard of my lover, a shadow of doubt would be injurious to us both; and were I ever to fear either, it is impossible it could be him. Every thing concurs to serve our purpose, the sky even seems to favor it; never have

I seen it so serene, not a cloud obscures the blue expanse. Since you have loved me, all nature has to me assumed a more smiling aspect. To-day I have heard many persons complain of the heat, but even the languor with which it has overpowered me, has for me a charm; and then, I have an idea, a project which enchants me. We will sup in the pretty arbor which is underneath my windows; we shall there enjoy to perfection the moon's mild lustre; its light is formed for love. No rich carpets, no gilded lamps shall annoy us with their empty pomp; but on the flowery turf, surrounded with pallisades of woodbine and jessamine, and overshadowed with trees of the most verdant foliage, such is the place where you will be expected; there we shall not regret the vain display of art; there we shall enjoy, in the midst of the city, the simplicity of rural nature. All minuter objects of delight,

which would be imperceptible to cold indifference, will be felt by us: we shall be together! No, there are no real luxuries but such as are pure; the heart open to remorse must be shut to happiness. We could not love each other so well, had we any thing to reproach ourselves with. What transport do I feel in saying to myself: I will confide to him the care of my fame and honor; they are dear to him as myself: his love is my existence; he knows, and can never forget it! he resembles not other men; I love him, he is happy; my confidence is well founded. He who is worthy of a real affection, will exact no proofs of it; the avowal of mine was not an indiscretion; my lover is virtuous.

But why did I so long combat a passion, of which you were the object? It distressed me—I feared you. How ungenerous and unjust!

Adieu.—I am going out on some

law business ; I shall return to receive you. My heart is penetrated with the sweetest joy ; no alarms mingle with it. How difficult shall I find it not to pronounce your name to my judges ! You have given me being ; a horrid void encompassed me ; I exist at length ; I live for you.

### LETTER LXXI.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO THE BARON.

WHAT have I done ? wretch that I am ! I have betrayed confidence, love, I might almost add honor, if it were possible that the being who reveres it in you, could himself be entirely lost to it. No, my remorse has not sufficiently expiated my fault. I condemn myself to blush before you for it. Shame is the punishment, and the portion of the guilty, who have not, however, yet lost



sight of virtue: I degrade myself in your eyes, that I may recover something in my own.

I was happy; I had the sweet hope of becoming every day more so; all is now destroyed; my happiness, my hopes, I have lost all! How shall I commence a recital afflicting to your soul, debasing to mine?—Ah! this weakness is yet another offence against virtue!—

You know how much I congratulated myself on the gradual progress I made in the heart of Madame de Senanges; each day displayed a growing passion in her, each day a new pleasure bloomed for me. I thought I should not have survived the avowal of her tenderness for me. The rigor of the duties she imposed upon me was softened by the pleasure of obeying her; any pangs which I felt were rather from the excess of my love, than from a desire to aug-

ment its claims. I struggled against the activity of the senses, against a temperament all of fire, by the assistance of a soul more ardent still ; and I cherished that pride of delicacy, which forms enjoyments even from the sacrifices of the heart.

Madame de Senanges went to spend some days in the country. Before her departure, I had supplicated her to give me a supper, at which none but we two should be present. On the very evening of her return, which was yesterday, she yielded to my request, from an excess of confidence which spoke the noble ingenuousness of her nature, but which cries out against me, and renders me still the more criminal. Never was misfortune preceded by appearances so smiling, but, alas ! so deceitful. All was prepared for us under the shade of the most solitary recess in the garden. The moon, which shone at intervals

through the branches of the elms, by which we were canopied, seemed to take a pleasure in illumining with her mystic beams the happiness of two lovers. A fresh and gentle breeze, which scarce agitated the tapers, wafted to us all the perfumes with which the air was embalmed. The stars glittered with the mildest fires. Never saw I nature so interesting ; I saw it by the side of Madame de Senanges, and all the charms with which the scene was embellished, seemed to be her work. With what impassioned tenderness did I contemplate this charming woman, to whom I was indebted for an existence, of which I had never before formed an idea ! It is impossible to paint to you her sweet gaiety, chastised by modest sense. She gave herself up to her lover in all the security of innocence ; esteemed him sufficiently to banish fear, and believed she should find her safety

even in the unaffected and unreserved testimonies of the chastest love. A throng of delicious sensations, till then unknown, glided to the inmost recesses of my heart, and penetrated it with a joy inexpressible, but deeply felt.

After supper, we wandered into the little wood which terminates the garden; and, although I burned with all love's fiercest fires, I have not to reproach myself with the attempt of a single liberty; I conceived not that any thing could add further to my happiness.—I was beside her—alone with her;—I was beloved. The excess of my felicity seemed to interdict any hopes, which, in promising pleasures more lively perhaps, would have deprived me of those more refined. A secret enthusiasm elevated me beyond myself. There are moments when love has in it something celestial.

The hour of her bed-time, that dread-

ed hour, now struck, and I thought that suddenly a curtain was drawn between me and universal nature. I prevailed so far however, as that we should walk another turn before we separated. A single moment, which she granted to my entreaties, was the cause of my crime. Not till then had I remarked one of the gates of the garden, by which I could go away without passing through the house; I then recollected, that once, as a piece of pleasantry, I had tried to open it with one of my keys, and had succeeded; this recollection gave birth to an idea very innocent in its principle, but dreadful in its consequences, of remaining there till the morning, and at least breathing the same air as Madame de Senanges. At our next return, I conducted her to her apartment, and quitted her with less regret, in the hope of watching all night near her.

I then feigned to retire, but, unper-

ceived by her domestics, I again glided into the garden, where I felicitated myself upon a stratagem, which was justified in my eyes by the purity of my intentions. I here attest honor, I swear it by Madame de Senanges herself, that I was as far from forming any project that could offend her, as from renouncing my love for her. I gave myself up to the enchantment of my situation ; I opened my heart to a crowd of sensations, unknown to common lovers ; my imagination was filled with a kind of magic voluptuousness ; all the dreams of happiness united to intoxicate my senses, and alienate my reason.—I trod in air ! • The silence of the night, its soothing calm, the solemn light of the heavens, all served to inspire me with extacy, with delirium ; I believed myself in a sanctuary, of which Madame de Senanges was the divinity.

The windows of her chamber had

been left half open, by reason of the excessive heat; the silk blinds were let down. I approached trembling: I held in my breath—my heart palpitated—scalding tears fell from my eyes; and, without admitting an impure thought, I remained as overpowered by the excess of my love. Recovered from the stupefaction of my faculties, caused by these impassioned languors, I went in search of some vases of flowers which ornamented the grounds, and placed them beneath the casement, that their perfumes might the sooner reach my beauteous mistress.

At length the morning dawned, and warned me to withdraw before I should be discovered. I know not what demon, foe to my dearest hopes, suggested the guilty wish of seeing, of admiring her during her repose. The windows of that front of the house were very low, almost on a level with the garden. Now

arrived the moment of trespass, or shame, and of eternal regret.

A violent tremor shook my whole frame; I tore myself from the spot; an involuntary impulse carried me back; again I quitted it, but still returned. With a hand at once audacious and timid, I raised the blind; that weak obstacle removed, I entered that sacred asylum which I ought to have respected. What a picture presented itself! Madame de Senanges asleep! to name her is to paint it! Never did any thing so enchanting present itself to my view. Her silken lashes formed a veil, which, in hiding the lustre of her eyes, prevented not their beauty from being discovered. A light lawn displayed to advantage the whiteness of her bosom.—What shall I say! her attitude, though unconstrained, was still modest; even in the unconsciousness of sleep, delicacy had not forsaken her.



I stood fixed in admiration and rapture. I felt not even the possibility of an attempt to insult her charms. It was my heart which enjoyed them, my senses were chained up by respect, and I fell prostrate before the angel whom I dared not approach.

Shall I proceed? Oh heavens! I have been able to survive so total an oblivion of myself! Dear Baron, whilst on my knees I worshipped, I felt an intoxication steal upon my senses at the view of so dangerous an object; Madame de Senanges appeared agitated by a dream, which at intervals forced from her some words confused and inarticulate; amongst other expressions interrupted and unconnected, I heard her pronounce my name. I cannot express to you what I at that moment felt; my eyes could no longer distinguish objects, a thick cloud encompassed me; it seemed as if my heart would burst from its confines to dart to-

wards her ; I fancied she called me, I fancied her arms were extended to seek me ; I precipitated myself into them ; I pressed my ardent lips to her's ; I covered her bosom with my kisses ; and my transports were about to lose all curb. She awoke with dreadful cries, and a horror which I merited to inspire.—

How awful is virtue ! how terrifying her indignation ! Madame de Senanges instantly recognized me, petrified me by a look, and annihilated all my faculties with this single sentence : *Wretch ! and is it thus thou lovest !* My eyes were in an instant drowned in tears, I would have answered, but could not ; my voice was stifled by sobs ; and I retreated with the confusion, the perturbation, the anguish and remorse of a base violator, who has stolen into a temple, and committed a sacrilege.

Happily none of her people were

stirring. Scarce able to support myself, I descended into the garden; that garden so beautiful in my eyes but a few moments before, seemed now a dreary waste, horrible to view. I gained the gate, opened it, and escaped. Returned to my own apartment, I threw myself upon my bed, in an agony of distress, which deprived me of all consciousness: the faithful Dumont in vain endeavoured to arouse me from this torpor; for near two hours I remained almost totally void of sensation, and now only recal my scattered ideas to make you this recital. I ask not your advice; it cannot now be of any further use to me. Load me with reproaches, none can be equal to my transgression. I have thrown happiness from my grasp; I am the most wretched of men. My friend, must I also lose your esteem?

## LETTER LXXII.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

I DOUBT whether I wake. I open my eyes almost extinguished by tears; I shut them again with terror; I would hide me from the face of day, it is horrible to me; it no longer rises but upon my dishonor, or rather upon your's. You whom I now abhor, who are you? I no longer know you.—What do I say! my misery is to know, to detest you—above all, to despise you.—What, I have debased myself so far as to love you, as to make you the avowal of my love! I believed you worthy of it, and this illusion you have torn from me, you have had the barbarity to tear it from me. Alas! I regret it—never can it return. You no longer excite in me any other

emotions than those of contempt, of indignation, I would say of pity, were you capable of remorse ; but no, he who could steal upon my slumbers, who knew not to respect the asylum of innocence, and the heart which had been confided to him, is not formed to repent. Enjoy the tears you have forced to flow, my despair, and my shame. My shame ! no, I feel it but for you—I am pure in my own eyes ; my virtue is undiminished, I have preserved it in spite of your transports. You alone are guilty, you alone to be pitied.

Ah ! why cannot I at the expence of my life, efface from your's the moment which degrades you ? I quit Paris ; the abode which you inhabit is odious to me, your presence would be insupportable. I cannot fly you too far : I shall never be remote enough from you. How shall I love those places where you are not known, which have never been con-

taminated by your presence, where I shall not even hear your name pronounced !—I shall there retrieve my lost happiness. What do I say ! there is no longer happiness for me ; it can never again enter that heart whence you have been expelled. I shall ever weep my passion, that sentiment you have forced me to renounce ; were I to weep for you, it would be the summit of my woes !—I should distrust the hatred I now feel, were I so unfortunate as to have the slightest spark of love remaining to counteract it. What an empire had you over that heart which you thus rend ! Heaven punishes me ; you were more than all, almost more than itself to me. How do I blush for myself ! Do not attempt to answer me ; grant me this last request. I shall feel the torment of owing you an obligation, but I must submit to it. Ah ! what do I not owe you already ? You have opened

my eyes, you restore me to myself; my resentment subsides, my love is expired. —I am at peace—I pardon you.

### LETTER LXXIII.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME DE  
SENANGES.

YOU have found out the secret of adding to the horrors of my situation. I expected reproaches; the more cruel they had been, the more sweet to me; my heart implored them, it wished only for your hand to tear wider its self-inflicted wounds. Guilty of a crime towards you of the deepest dye, profaner of virtue itself, I had still need of your anger to complete my punishment; but the calm which has succeeded that anger, your dreadful tranquillity, your cold pardon, are refinements of vengeance which I could not have conceived. I had rather meet your hate, than see you for one

moment insensible to my offences; offences did I say? to my most heinous wrongs! Was it not one to pass the night near you without your knowledge, and to have risked exposing you to all the suspicions which might have arisen from such an imprudence? Was it not still worse to force my way into the asylum where you reposed? The audacity which followed, exceeded both: yet you are tranquil! yet it is I who am obliged to rouse your resentment! Ah! you are more barbarous than you believe yourself. You despise me, you say!—No, no, you must not despise me. A delirium of the senses is not a debasement of the heart. I had no premeditated design, I swear it at your feet; I may sin against reason, never against virtue. The man of true honor strays from its laws for an instant, only to return to them with redoubled ardor. Was it possible for me to remain insensible to



the view of so many charms?—they are at once my ruin, and my justification. But whither do I again wander! Oh you, arbiter of my fate! you, my supreme judge! pardon a transport which my heart belies! it is far from absolving itself, that heart which has offended, but which adores you; and which complains of nothing but of not being sufficiently punished. Were you again to deign to see me, the paleness of my cheeks, the abundance of my tears, the remorse by which I am torn, would prove to you the extent of my self-condemnation; how much I feel that my punishment is merited.—Is it true that you will go? Shall I never see you more? Beware how you fulfil such a resolution; fear the man whom love has driven to madness, but whose frenzy will become still wilder from despair.—I no longer know what I say.—I rave—I tremble—I weep, and fear every

thing.—Is there a desert, a savage shore, an uninhabited wilderness, where I would not follow you? Has the earth a solitude which I would not explore in search of you? After the crime which my passion has made me commit, it is capable of every energy; it acquires new growth amidst my crimes, my remorse, my anguish.—To behold you, or to cease to live; this is the solemn vow, the proclaimed purpose of my heart, let it re-echo to your's. You prohibit my writing; perhaps will not deign to receive this! I shudder with apprehension; the idea overpowers me. I cannot go on.—Adieu! cruel as you are!—

## LETTER LXXIV.

FROM THE BARON, TO THE CHEVALIER.

AVOID me ; no longer write to me. Why should I be the confidant of your secrets? I loved to believe you superior even to the opinion I had formed of you ; I cherished this vain chimera ; but it is at an end. Although you followed not all my counsels, at least you seemed sensible of their value ; and I was consoled for the excess of your passion, by that delicacy of sentiment which I supposed accompanied it. At present, what have I to hope ; what have I left to attach me to you? If love, in your heart, is not more pure, more noble, than in another, are you still worthy of friendship? You are wanting to all, in wounding that love,

which ought to have been in you the pledge of every virtue. You have insulted the most respectable of women—you have afflicted your friend and her's—you have barred the hearts of both against you; yet you dare look into your own. Behold that boasted heroism of which you were so vain! It heated your head, but warmed not your heart. Oh! my virtuous friend, most amiable of women, I was certainly inspired when I cautioned you against perfidious flatteries, and besought you to avoid a snare covered over with flowers only to deceive you! How must you weep at the recollection of my last letter! I wept whilst writing it: it seems as if I had foreseen the outrage which an ingrate had in store for you.

Was it necessary that Madame de Senanges should be chosen as the sport of your unbridled passion, the victim of

your audacity? You had not formed the project!—A most satisfactory excuse! Had you been capable of doing so, I should not have condescended to have manifested my anger; I should have prohibited myself even from pronouncing your name. I have never been a peevish moralist; but I am inexorable as to those weaknesses which involve the happiness of one being, and the probity of another. Had Madame de Senanges been a woman of an ordinary stamp, I should have condemned you, because the abuse of confidence must ever be blameable; but your conduct would only have been disapproved by my understanding, but come not near my heart.—Would I could now say so? What a woman have you rendered miserable! Think of her conflicts, her pangs; of all she suffered previous to the confession of her tenderness; of the repentance which followed

it. To fill up the measure of her griefs, you force her to hate you, just as she had begun to expect to find her felicity in the pleasure of loving you. I

I will not dwell upon this picture; it would harden me against you, and I wish only to be just. If my tone displeases you, you are lost. Recollect the attachment which subsisted between your father and me: his last words were to recommend his son to my affection; and it was in his expiring heart that I deposited the oath of friendship. I watched over the progress of your education with a tender attention; but it was for your entrance into the bustle of the world, that I reserved my zeal. I have hitherto fulfilled, I will, till death, fulfil the engagements which I took upon me: can you ever become so abandoned as to force me to perjury?

Your letter at first excited my indignation; on a calmer perusal, it has af-

fect ed me with a degree of compassion ; because I still esteem you enough to believe you must be a real object of pity. Means must now be thought of to repair your errors. It is necessary to her happiness, that Madame de Senanges should once more esteem the man who for a moment acted so as to become contemptible in her eyes. Let her again find a lover worthy of her, and you will again be sure of possessing a friend.

## LETTER LXXV.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO THE BARON.

I MADE you the confession of my fault, when I might have concealed it from you ; and he who fears not to humble himself before his friend, is worthy of preserving him. The tone of your letter

has grieved me, which I believe was your intention; but it has not offended me. I know all the claims which you possess over my heart; and the first, in my eyes, is that independent charm, that impulse so sweet, that powerful sympathy, which indicates to the soul that which is most congenial to it, to receive the effusion of its pleasures, its pains, even its weaknesses. Other considerations might have inspired me with a distant respect, but would never have obtained from me those sentiments of a friendship the most tender. You are the friend of my choice, not of circumstances. Pity me—overwhelm me not—I die—I wish not to live—I have no longer any thing to expect, any thing to hope for; the present tortures me; the future—may be abridged!—She writes not—answers not—refuses to receive my letters; this is all I see, all I feel. Demand not from me a degree of



courage impossible to be attained. Cruel woman ! is she not sufficiently avenged ? She carries her barbarity to such a height, as makes me less criminal. What have I then done, Oh, Heavens ! only obeyed love, rapture, the sweetest instinct of nature ?—Even you, in my place, would not have been able to restrain yourself within the cold limits of moderation. All that beauty has, which can fascinate and delight, was presented to my view ; I believed I heard myself named by Madame de Senanges ; all her motions discovered such an infinity of charms ! —Was it in nature that my eyes, that my lips, could be withheld from devouring them ! A celestial intelligence had then partook of sense ; he would have renounced the perfection of his essence for the pleasure of becoming guilty.—

And then, did not her first look arrest my ardors ? Amidst the madness of

my transports, did not my heart acknowledge her voice? That lover so audacious, did he not prostrate himself before her? She recalls only my transgression; and refuses to recollect my respect, my contrition. There are moments in which I regret my not having profited by the delirium of love, to seize on all its rights. Oh, intimate bond of union!—sacred tie!—happiness superior to humanity, which mutually attracts two enraptured hearts! attaches, penetrates, mingles them for ever, thou wouldst have left me a share of hers; and that, at least, should not have escaped me!—Where am I! what have I said!—Ah! my reason is totally fled! I would no longer retain it! Reproach me not!—dread my despair! Treat me, dear Baron, with that tenderness which is due to misery!

## LETTER LXXVI.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO  
MONSIEUR DE VALOIS.

My protector! my friend! give way to no solicitudes for your unfortunate niece! I set out for the estate given up to me by M. de Senanges; and before you receive this letter, I shall be already far removed from you. I feared your expostulations, your entreaties: I should not have known how to resist them, yet it is necessary for me to fly. I am a prey to the most gloomy sorrow: I pant after solitude; and the rocks of \*\*\*\* will suit the present habit of my soul. That soul is deeply depressed; but it bears with it your image, the remembrance of all your goodness, and it cannot be altogether unhappy. I re-

nounce all, except my affection for you ; I am no longer attached to any but you. Keep the secret of my retreat ; I implore of you this further kindness.— Oh, you who have ever held the place of a father to me, what pangs has it cost me to quit you !—Continue to love me, I deserve you should.—My sobs suffocate me.—You alone are left me in the universe. Adieu.

## LETTER LXXVII.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME

DE \*\*\*\*.

AH ! Madame, you are the friend of Madame de Senanges ; I have experienced your goodness. What is become of her ? where is she ? It would be in vain for me to attempt to conceal from you to what an excess I adore her ;

numberless times have I betrayed myself ; judge then of my anguish ! She has left her uncle ; he knows not himself the abode she inhabits. I live in agonies—I run from place to place—I rave like one distracted—I demand Madame de Senanges from every object with which I am encompassed ! Alas ! I can find her no where but in my heart. She hides nothing from you. I address myself to you ; oh, restore to me my peace, my reason, my existence ! I sink under my despair : extend a hand to save me. Have pity on me ; tell me—and be assured I shall preserve till my latest hour the grateful remembrance of such a benefit.

## LETTER LXXVIII.

FROM MADAME DE \*\*\*\*, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

YOUR letter, Monsieur, found me bathed in tears : I am as agitated, I tremble equally with yourself. Madame de Senanges is my best—what do I say ? she is the only friend of my heart. I know her virtues, and I adore them ; I would give my life for the preservation of hers. What new misfortune can have snatched her from me ? I weep both her absence, and the mystery she has made to me of its cause. Heavens ! should it have originated from you, how should I detest you ! I would demand of you to restore me the sweetest solace of my life ; you should answer to me for the misery of my friend. I am totally ig-

norant of every circumstance. Search, solicit, interrogate; use every means; and should any lights reach you, hasten to impart them to me. Sleep is banished from my eyes; or should I slumber for an instant, it is only to be tormented with horrid dreams. How much do souls of sensibility suffer! yet I should be sorry to exchange my feelings, unless for those of Madame de Senanges. What a woman!—My tears at this moment speak her praise.

## LETTER LXXIX.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO

MADAME DE \*\*\*\*.

*Chateau de \*\*\*\*.*

How shall I disclose to you what I would wish to hide from myself? How unveil his shame?—I no longer esteem

him ; learn the extent of my misery :—  
The idol whom my heart had set up, he  
whom I worshipped, whom I looked  
up to as a divinity, is the most vile of  
mortals.—He has betrayed my confi-  
dence.—He would have taken advan-  
tage of my sleep ! I had placed myself  
under the safeguard of his passion.  
What imprudence ! it has ruined my  
peace ; my love is extinguished.—A  
dreadful despair has succeeded it in my  
bosom ; and all, even the recollection  
of my days of innocence, all is horrible  
to me. May his roll on in peace ! in-  
human as he is, he is not worthy to  
partake my torments.—May remorse  
never approach his heart ! may he be  
happy ! I am avenged. I hate—I de-  
spise him !—He could be base enough  
to force me to do so ! I should detest  
even his penitence.—May he ever re-  
main ignorant to what an extent I loved  
him ; to what an extent—I and others—



able ! But of what importance to me his happiness, his regrets, what he thinks, what he feels ? My honor is unsullied : I have preserved it from his audacity, and from my own weakness. I will forget even his name ; never again mention it to me. All his over—never more will I behold him—I have renounced the entire universe—I fly all eyes ; for in all I should think I saw reproaches written. The avowal of my passion was a crime ; self-inflicted punishment must be the atonement. I will end my days in this retreat, alas ! far from my uncle, far from you ! I have torn myself from all that was most dear to me, and yet I live ! My ill-placed love is expiated. The place I now inhabit is a desert ; therefore the more suitable to me : would it were more gloomy still. That chain of mountains which hides it from almost every eye, does not yet enough conceal me ; the light of day

fills me with anguish, the shades of night with despair; the calm aspect of nature cannot restore my peace. I condemn myself to solitude; I have given up all; and his image pursues me!—Is this to hate? Ah! when M. de Senanges gave me up this seat, which I vowed to myself never more to approach, who could have foreseen that it would become my asylum? who could have imagined, above all, that I should ever look back with comparative pleasure to the days I past here with him? Then persecuted, but irreproachable, I had only fate to accuse. I was at peace with myself, yet I believed I had reached the summit of wretchedness! I have now attained it.—Have you seen him? has he written to you? If he should be deeply miserable!—What, and should I be weak enough, mean enough to be interested by it? No; it is from a noble motive that I do

not wish him ill ; and I take a pride in thus rising superior to him ; it renders him still the more culpable. In mercy, let him remain ignorant of the place of my retreat. And you, dear and valued companion of my happier days, judge by the importance of the secret I have confided to you, of the tender attachment of your unfortunate friend.

P. S. As I know not whether the Marechal de \*\*\*\* is at Paris, or his country seat, will you do me the kindness to forward the enclosed letter to his address ? He will not find out from it the place from whence I write. I should wish him to succeed in his solicitations for the appointment which has been promised to—I dare not name him. I should feel the sincerest pleasure in hating him, could I, at the same time render him any service.

## LETTER LXXX.

FROM MADAME DE \*\*\*\*, TO MADAME  
DE SENANGES.

WHAT joy did my heart feel on the first receipt of your letter ; but how was it grieved on reading it ! My friend, my tender friend, do a hundred leagues then separate us ?—and can I no longer fly into your arms ?—no longer pour into your bosom the consolations of friendship ? What anxiety have I suffered for some days past !—alas ! your confidence has not served to tranquillize me ! Dear and interesting victim of love and honor, what additional rights have you acquired over my soul ! Oh, Heavens ! the Chevalier was beloved, and it is he who is the cause of all your anguish ! He has betrayed your fond

security ; he has been wanting to honor, to virtue ; yet you weep ! yet you deign to fly him ! you interest yourself for him ! you solicit, unknown to him, an appointment which he is no longer worthy to obtain ! He merits only indignation ; or rather to be entirely erased from your memory ! But you forget him ! you who speak, who think only of him ! Your protestations of hatred are transports of love. You detest the crime, but adore the criminal. Your reproaches are the effusions of a heart inflamed with the most ardent passion ; and the image of the ingrate follows you, less to irritate than to soften you. Ah ! hate him not so much ; that will be the means to detach you more quickly from him. Did you believe you should effect your cure by thus banishing yourself from society ? My friend, you have committed an imprudence unavailing to your own repose ;

and which it depends only on a cruel world to interpret to your disadvantage. You are given up to yourself in the midst of mountains, amongst solitary rocks, which re-echo only to your regrets; you have imagined that the view of nature in its most savage form would steel your heart against the weaknesses of impassioned tenderness: how have you deceived yourself! The asylums of melancholy serve only to nourish love in souls of sensibility, by that tender sadness with which it inspires them. Shut out from all intercourse but with their own hearts, they delight to contemplate the shaft by which they have been wounded; impressions become more profound; their tears flow; they find a fatal charm in indulging them; and the malady is aggravated by those very remedies which had been applied to heal it. Return amongst us; you will here find avocations to amuse you,

counsels to fortify you, and minds which can speak to yours. Where you are, all is mute except your own heart; which raises its voice against you, in favor of the traitor of whom you are in pursuit perhaps, whilst you believe you fly him. Disappointed love sighs, without perceiving it, for leisure to dwell on recollections which but augment its bitterness. We will here preserve you from those illusions of sensibility. If these motives affect you not, can you resist the grief of M. de Valois? He is in despair. Some days ago, he came to visit me, and interrogated me upon the mystery of so sudden a departure. I knew not what to say to him; we wept together; and, with a heart torn by anguish, and eyes bathed in tears, I endeavoured to console him. My friend, you owe him too much not to fly with eagerness to put an end to his sufferings, and at the same time to

shelter your reputation from the danger of malignant conjectures. You are young, beautiful, and virtuous; what motives to provoke calumny; make not yourself a subject for busy tongues; have not against you the crime of appearances. To quiet, in some degree, the apprehensions of M. de Valois, I thought of telling him, that M. de Senanges having come to Paris, with the design of seeking a reconciliation with you, perhaps you had wished to elude his pursuit. I reproach not myself for a falsehood which tends to justify you. Again, I conjure you, quit your gloomy abode; on my knees, I entreat it.

I have myself delivered your letter to the Marechal; who charged me to assure you, that the business of the Chevalier wears the most promising appearance. And it is to you he owes this obligation! what a soul is yours! and how much do even your weaknesses appear to me



superior to the virtue of others! Adieu: I did believe it impossible for me to love you better; but your misfortunes have made me feel that the most tender friendship can admit of increase.

### LETTER LXXXI.

FROM THE CHEVALIER DE VERSENAI, TO  
THE BARON.

SHE is gone!—she has borne my soul with her; I exist only by the force of anguish. All is despair; I no longer look forward to the possibility of happiness. She is gone!—and the place of her retreat is an impenetrable secret! Oh Baron! when first I learned this dreadful news, my blood congealed, my reason fled, all was funeral gloom around me. Recovered from my first consternation, I proceeded to interrogate all whom I thought could give me any intelligence,

or remove my recking suspense. I wandered on all sides, sought every where, made the most minute inquiries at every convent in Paris and its environs ; and the fruit of my researches was only increased anxiety. To the transports of my despair succeeded a settled gloom, a horrid and profound melancholy. Dear Baron, by what transgressions have I then merited all the evils I am forced to endure ? To do good has ever afforded me the highest gratification ; I honor virtue in others, and feel a noble emulation to imitate them : my sole crime is too great a degree of sensibility. Great God !, if sensibility is thy gift, thou makest us pay dearly for the benefit. Cause mysterious and inscrutable, prime mover, supreme being of beings, why hast thou thrown us upon this globe, since the passions which thou hast given us are so many snares where misery lurks beneath ; since sentiments as pure as thyself become

wildly tempestuous, in minds the most gentle, and the most virtuous; since love, which ought to be the charm of life, as it is its source, serves only to fill it with anguish and bitterness, and to rend those hearts where it ought to shed the balm of consolation? Ideas of this nature plunge me into reveries, which, while they last, point only to the tomb. But gracious Heaven! perhaps at this moment Madame de Senanges weeps! and it is I who cause her tears to flow; I who adore her, who would die with delight were one single look from her to honor my last moments. We are become mutual torments to each other, from the ardent desire of our mutual felicity: yet what has she to reproach me with? An emotion, a transport independent of my will, and which my heart disavowed as soon as I became master of my reason. Where is happiness to be found! My friend, to you I dwell upon each cir-

cumstance, I give way to my reflections, they sooth my sorrows by indulging my melancholy. I fear not being troublesome to you ; when overwhelmed with my misery, I throw part of the burthen on you, and you have never yet rejected it. O sublime friendship ! one of the great advantages of adversity, is to force the man beaten by the tempest to take refuge in thy bosom ; and he who has not been unhappy is still unworthy to possess a friend.

### LETTER LXXXII.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO MADAME DE \* \* \*.

You rend my heart, your expostulations kill me ; it is torture to me not to yield to them, it is dreadful to live separated from you ; hope not however to prevail. What, again expose myself to see

him !—Alas ! he is not hated ; my rage deceived me. Hate him !—More culpable still, I feel he would not be less adored. Your friend has no other resource but to bury herself in this retreat : her ill-fated love condemns her to it. I have not yet been able to subdue it ; I may acquire strength. Here, till the last sigh that agitates this throbbing heart, will I weep my own error, his crime, my separation from my uncle, and from you. My situation is horrible ; each day, each instant redoubles its anguish. I wander through these desert wilds, alone, remote from all those I love, deprived of every thing, yet cannot escape the destroyer of my peace ; he pursues me even in my sleep ; indignant at my own weakness, I endeavour to banish the idea, but in vain ; all my efforts serve only to deepen the wound which nothing can ever heal. Know further yet :—his transgression which I

avenge upon myself, and which I detest. Would you believe it? I have surprised in myself, in the midst of my agonies, in the midst even of my indignation, I have surprised with horror and affright the guilty wish of again finding myself pressed in his arms. I die with confusion. I shall lose all your esteem, but I had rather risk even that, than conceal from you a single sentiment of my heart:—your friendship will still remain to me, your pity is my due. Judge at present whether I ought to quit this abode watered with my tears, witness to my sobs, my struggles, and of my weakness. —Ah! never. And shall I never forget him!—that remembrance ever recoiled from, must it be ever present!

My uncle—Oh Heavens!—I have just received a letter—they tell me—my uncle is dying! I fly to him, I accuse myself of his death, I deplore my absence, I tremble for my return. Should

I not again hold him pressed in these arms !—should I embrace only his lifeless form !—should—Prolong his days, great God, and cut short my existence ! Deprive not humanity of thy most perfect image ; what I merit not to obtain for myself, I implore for thy own glory. I know not where I am, nor what I do. Ah ! how could I have the cruelty to leave him ! I can never, never forgive myself. My friend has an inflammation in his lungs !—he is expiring ! Fate had only this last stroke in reserve for me ; I shall sink beneath it ; this is my only hope. And shall I again return to the place where that foe to my honor inhabits ! Oh agony !—but it matters not, I will endure the worst—this instant I set out.—My projects, my resolutions, my interest itself, all is forgotten.—A horrid perspective opens before me ; but it is the loss of the most tender, the most virtuous, the most respectable of men that

I weep. I will demand from Heaven, from all nature to restore him to me; may my cries be heard! Betrayed by the man I adored, trembling for the worthy object of my best affections, am I yet sufficiently wretched! No, inhuman being, no, I will think no more of thee; nothing now interests me but the danger of the most noble of beings, of him who least resembles thee. Alas! I had found in him a second father; he had all the goodness, all the tenderness of one. I love him too well to speak of my gratitude; but you know, my friend, what he has done for me:—my happiness was his work:—but I might have owed him still more; to him I might have been indebted for every virtue, had I followed his example. And shall I never more behold him! are his eyes for ever closed! shall I be deprived of their mild inspiring influence—deprived of it for ever! I cannot, I have not fortitude to support



this overwhelming idea. How many days of peace and happiness have I past under his paternal roof ! Alas ! they can never return ; but let him live, let me again behold him, let every instant of my future life be marked by some new care for him, and I will endure all without a murmur. What a moment of destruction and anguish ! how intense my torments !—and ah ! how weak my fortitude. Dearest friend, I had but one asylum, one support ; perhaps, whilst I write it, that asylum, that support is no longer mine. An abyss is opened, and may soon close over me ; I shall again fall into the power of M. de Senanges. Yes, if M. de Velois is torn from me, I have every misfortune to fear. I look forward to all ; but I feel, I dread only the loss of him. All is ready for my journey—Adieu, my friend. Judge if I love you ! I give you the assurance of it in the midst of so many

agitations, sollicitudes, and alarms. What is the doom I am soon to have pronounced?—A faintishness!—I have been very ill!—I am better, and just setting out.

### LETTER LXXXIII.

FROM THE BARON, TO THE CHEVALIER.

UNHAPPY young man! of what do you complain? That same sensibility, now the cause of so much anguish, may one day more than double all your enjoyments. You are at that age in which mankind exaggerate all, particularly their misfortunes; in which they forget only their errors. Those reverses of which they are themselves the cause, are always the imputed faults of Providence. They never reproach themselves with any thing, that alone is to blame in all; and they thus add to a levity which might

be pardonable, an ingratitude which never can. Believe me, you are but too happy in being under the government of that Providence, ever acting for the happiness of those even who brave its power: you calumniate, I bless it, and it watches equally over us both. Was it not that kind lover which placed in your path a friend, who offered himself to conduct your steps, but to whom you would not listen? Is it not that which points out this friend in all your sorrows, which he is ever ready to share? Cease then to give way to unjust murmurs; to the reveries of a sick heart, and the sophisms of a false philosophy. But however all this may be, your letter has most sensibly affected me. I feel unfeignedly the distress of your situation: you have only yourself to blame for it, but it is not the less dreadful, nor do I contemplate it with the less tenderness on that account. What, Madame de Senanges has disap-

peared, and no one knows to what place she is retired! How do I pity her! Cruel man! into what a heart have you carried devastation! But I am at this moment far from wishing to act against you. An idea has occurred to me; take no wrong advantage of it, I mention it only to tranquillize you. I suspect she is gone to a country seat which she possesses in the \*\*\*. It is a savage wild, exactly suited to a soul impassioned and melancholy as hers. In the name of friendship, abuse not this conjecture; the least imprudence, by sullyng the fair fame of Madame de Senanges, would ruin you beyond redress in her heart, and in my favor. Be calm! bear those evils to which you have yourself given existence: have at least the philosophy of misfortune: it consists in courage; and there is no extremity in life in which it is permitted us to be wanting in it.

P. S. You no longer speak to me of Madame D'Ercy:—what is become of her? She has a plotting head, and a depraved heart; you know it. My warning voice some time since cautioned you to be on your guard against her; I now repeat it.—Adieu.

## LETTER LXXXIV.

FROM MADAME D'ERCY, TO THE CHEVALIER.

WHAT demon of extravagance had got possession of you the day before yesterday, my dear Chevalier, in the wood of \*\*\*? You walked with hasty strides; your air was distracted, your gestures convulsive, and the whole of your appearance, wild and savage in the extreme. As soon as you perceived me, you darted like lightning into the recesses of a gloomy shade, as if the view

of the female countenance was become hideous to you. Upon my word, you bore a strong resemblance to a certain *woeiful prince*, who figured in, I know not what romance; or to that madman, Orlando, who tore up trees by the roots, because his mistress happened to be faithless. Or, if you like the comparison better, to Don Quixote in the black forest: there wanted only to complete the similitude, a palfrey for you to mount, a princess to disenchant, and giants to hew in pieces. When people choose to make themselves ridiculous, it is quite right they should carry it to this excess; they then become amusing to others. So it is an affair arranged, you are absolutely turned knight-errant in purity of soul, as well as in prowess. Madame de Senanges must laugh heartily at your heroics. She has deprived you of your reason, your air, your graces; and what has she given you in recompence? No.

thing. All this is admirable ! She treats you quite in character. It is further said, that to be altogether in the *costume*, she is gone far, and farther than I can tell.— I have not heard where ; but it is a point rendered sacred by the archives of the Bellianuses, the Amadisés, and the Polixanders, that there should be at least an hundred leagues distance between the sighs of the knight, and the beauties of the dame : you seem both well versed in these grand principles, you adore each other at a respectful distance. I have a violent passion for this mode of proceeding. Raillery apart, Chevalier, why has Madame de Senanges thus inhumanly abandoned you ?—there are a thousand different turns given to this absence ; I am not yet in possession of half. I have myself been for some days in the country, but I must endeavour to overtake the stream. All I at present know, is that Madame de Senanges has escaped from

you, in order, you may be assured, that you may not escape from her; and, since she has found means to bewitch you to the degree she has, I can believe her equal to any thing. In all events you may rely with confidence on my friendship. I look up to you as to a man who has seen two or three centuries pass over his head: a circumstance which must inspire veneration and curiosity:—Adieu, Chevalier. Before long I shall give you some proofs, not at all equivocal, of my affection.—It is but right to forget and forgive.

### BILLET.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO MADAME DE \* \* \*.

I ARRIVED last night. Again I breathe: M. de Valois is better. I held him for a quarter of an hour clasped in my arms, without power to utter a syllable.



He has made me no reproaches ; he received me with his usual goodness, and I have tasted a moment of joy. Tomorrow morning I shall be with you by the time you rise ; a few more minutes of happiness still in store for me. Alas ! how quickly they pass !—Adieu.

BILLET.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME

DE \* \* \*.

Is it true, Madame?—is Madame de Senanges returned ? I dare not write to her ; still less dare I present myself before her. I have recourse to you : take pity on my distress ; the state to which I am reduced would soften a heart the most insensible ; yours is far otherwise. I have ingenuously recounted to you the rise and progress of my passion : I did not attempt to conceal my transgres-

sions: you heard me with indulgence, and saw in them only the faults of love. Ah, Madame! if you would deign to speak one word in my favor! But through you I have no hope. Trembling I await your answer, and shudder lest I should be refused. Excuse my request, I entreat you; I am in despair! Pity, but do not condemn me.

### BILLET.

FROM MADAME DE \*\*\*, TO THE CHEVALIER.

MADAME DE SENANGES was with me, Monsieur, when I received your letter; she knew your writing, and fell almost lifeless into my arms. Recovered from the shock, she prohibited my even mentioning your name to her, and I was careful not to disobey her. Do not attempt to write to her; this is not the

moment to succeed: and above all, be not seen near the house where she resides, expect all from time, and still more from your own good conduct. You interest me, because I believe you to be a man of honor, notwithstanding your transgression; but you have wounded the soul of my friend, and I cannot promise to speak to her in your favor.

## LETTER LXXXV.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO MADAME DE \* \* \*.

WELL, am I not sufficiently weak, sufficiently unhappy? I cannot even behold his hand-writing without being affected to my inmost soul. I wished to call on you this morning, but am yet scarcely recovered from the agitation to which you were witness. What then has he written to you? Perfidious man! what

could he have to say to you? How could I prevail on myself to impose silence on you when you were about to speak to me of him! and was it necessary for you to comply? You might have been very certain of the pleasure you would have given me, in violating an injunction so grievous to my heart, and which might have been easily interpreted by yours. My friend, I love him more than ever. All these places where I have so often beheld him at my feet—that chamber, the scene at once of his crime, and his submission—the garden where I have so often wandered to meditate only on him—all the objects which surround me recal his image; all invite me still to adore him, all assume voices to speak in his defence.

Yesterday, whilst I sat at my uncle's bedside conversing with him: "The Chevalier de Versenai," said he, "has paid me attentions which I shall never forget; he

called himself twice every day to inquire after me ; and when my illness was at the height, went away with tears in his eyes."

My friend, had my uncle looked at me at that moment, he would have seen mine flow. I arose and quitted him hastily that I might weep at liberty in one corner of the chamber. This good M. de Valois in speaking to me thus, was little conscious of the profound impression he should leave in the heart of his niece ; he knew not that this man so feeling towards him, was the god of her idolatry ; and that his tenderness for me is reflected on all with whom I am connected. His face, I am told, is much altered ; and this is my work ! What, those charming features, so indelibly graven on my heart, has grief tarnished their beauty ! am I the cause of it ! and shall I hesitate to pardon, to see him ? But, cruel man ! he writes not, comes

not ! Ah ! doubtless, he fears I shall return his letters ; he trembles to displease me ; and I accuse him of an offence against me, whilst he gives me the most delicate proof of his attachment.

Heavens ! what a piece of intelligence I have heard ! My sweet friend, how have I enjoyed it ! The place of \*\*\* is granted to the Chevalier : can you conceive my transports ? Let us not complain of the torments of love, since it is the source of pleasures so exquisite. He knows nothing of the steps I have taken in the business ; he shall never know them, and my happiness will be the greater. I quit you to write my thanks to the Marechal for his successful exertions ; he knows not all the extent of the obligation.

BILLET.

FROM THE MARECHAL DE \*\*\*\*, TO MADAME DE SENANGES.

YOU are very amiable, Madame ; but you interest yourself for persons who possess no great share of wisdom. I have seen the Chevalier de Versenai this morning ; he seemed very much enraged at the favor of the court ; he thanked the minister, but was scarcely certain of having obtained the appointment, before he began to talk of his dismissal from it. I can conceive nothing of the business. I attempted to bring him to reason ; I represented to him that he was wanting to his friends, and that it was a bad return for their zeal to act in so extraordinary a manner ; I mentioned you as being of the number.—On this I believed him actually seized with mad-

ness ; he flew from me without uttering another word, and left me absolutely stupified with a scene which I believe has no parallel. You can perhaps explain this énigma to me : I still hope the Chevalier will have the goodness to pardon the king for having preferred him to his competitors ; but in whatever way the affair terminates, I shall never repent what I have done in compliance with your commands.

## LETTER LXXXVI.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME DE  
SENANGES.

OH Heaven ! add to the faculties of my soul, furnish me with expressions worthy of my transports, and be thyself the organ of my gratitude, by inspiring me with some of thy celestial energy ! At this moment, the most glorious of my



life, you will pardon me, Madame, for forgetting your orders, for obeying only those of my own heart.—I no longer know myself; I moisten with tears the paper on which I write with a trembling hand. Image of the Divinity, you who reward offences only by benefits, it is impossible you can reject my homage. What, in the recesses of your solitude you could think of rendering me service! I had a place in your remembrance! Gracious Powers! And I wished to refuse an appointment obtained through your means! I could not guess the hand from whence such an obligation proceeded! I shall never pardon myself. Had my soul been as great, as sublime as yours, I could not have been thus mistaken. How much do you soar above me! you sink me still lower by the superiority of your virtues; you could not be more thoroughly avenged.—Avenged! Great God! can this be

your motive? I shudder at the idea! penetrated as I am by your benefits, if the heart had no share in them, they would be a grievous burthen; I should accept of them from obedience, but I should die at your feet, decorated with a title which I should owe to your generosity, but to no warmer a sentiment. Remove my doubts; permit me to throw myself at your feet, and to read in your eyes either my pardon, or my sentence of condemnation. Recollect those moments in which you have vowed to me a never-ending attachment; a fault of which love was the cause, should be punished only by love. Deign only to admit me to your presence; your first glance will convince you, more than all my protestations, of the sincerity of my repentance: only see me, it is all I ask.

Adieu!

BILLET.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

WELL, Monsieur, I will see you; I consent to it: but, as a preliminary, I insist on your calling on my friend Madame de \*\*\*\*, and bringing her with you. Talk not to me of gratitude; if I have served you, I feel that I am still your debtor. I thank you for the interest you took in the illness of M. de Valois; that obligation acquits you of more than all I have done for you.

## LETTER LXXXVII.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME DE  
SENANGES.

WHAT a soul-moving scene of rapture, of tenderness ! its impression is still entire in my memory ; never can it be erased from it. I am no more the same ; you have exalted me to a level with yourself ; I no longer feel the difficulty of the conditions ; I look forward only to the glory of fulfilling them. I have retained each syllable that you uttered ; my eager soul devoured them fast as they fell from your lips.

“ Chevalier,” you said, “ I pardon you ; this might suffice to tell you that I still love you ; I renew the avowal of my attachment, and I deposit the oath which confirms it in the hands of my friend : but she must also receive yours : and I

exact from you, in her presence, that you will henceforward respect my duties, my principles, and the fatal, but sacred tie which binds me. Friendship will witness your promise; honor will be its seal; and love its recompence. Should you fail in its observance, you will wound at once love, honor, and friendship."

No, my adorable friend, no; I can never fail in the observance: I shall employ, to merit a continuance of your love, all the ardor which I would exert to obtain it. The assurance which I give you of it, is founded upon my transgression itself: it has taught me that I could stray from virtue; and my present strength depends upon the knowledge of my past weakness. Each degree of perfection which will bring me nearer to your standard, will be an additional enjoyment to my heart: the more ardent the desires to which you

will give birth, the more sweet it will be to bring them in chains to your feet; and I shall measure my pleasure by the torments of the sacrifice. To love you, to be beloved by you, to consecrate to you each action of my life, to purify my thoughts in addressing you, to new qualities which may render me worthy of your virtues, this happiness will with me hold place of all others: it will constitute yours, and I will seek no further luxury! No; a spark of your unpolled soul has intermingled with mine. Henceforward, I adopt your affections, your tastes, your sentiments. Let us deplore only, but for the last time, let us together deplore, the misfortune of two beings, like us attracted towards each other by the sentiments of nature, but separated by the authority of the laws. You must reserve for your tyrant, for your tormentor, those charms which belong, of

right, only to the object of your love! he whose heart worships you, must yet respect the wretch whose jealousy has made you suffer!—We must—oh tyranny of prejudice! source inexhaustible of tears!—but let me draw a veil over this representation of misery—Misery!—it no longer exists for me. I have read my pardon in your eyes, and all is smiling to mine. I forget all I have suffered. Pain is already far removed, when felicity commences. Souls of sensibility have this privilege over others, though pierced with all the arrows of misfortune, to preserve, in all its purity, the source of the most exquisite pleasures.

## LETTER LXXXVIII.

FROM THE VICOMTE DE SENANGES,  
TO HIS BROTHER.

It is too much to endure ; my part is taken, Commandeur. I write to you not to ask your advice, but to inform you of my determination, which is immoveable. I love Madame de Senanges more than ever ; at the sole mention of her name, my blood rushes in torrents from my heart, and agitates me almost to suffocation. I agreed to our separation from an impulse of pride ; or rather, because I was myself wearied with the torments I inflicted on her. My soul, thrown back upon itself with all its weight, feels the necessity of yielding to its passion, should I even perish by it, and drag along with me the ob-



ject whom fate has united to me. Jealousy, horrible when given way to, is the most infernal of furies, when concentrated. For want of other aliment, my heart preys upon itself. You cannot form an idea of my torments. In vain I try to dissipate them by violence of exercise, by passing my life at the chase, and by taking a savage pleasure in destroying the tenants of the fields, since I have no other being over whom to tyrannize; the envenomed shaft is still within me; it infuses a consuming fire through my veins; it adheres the more closely to my heart, as I strive to pluck it thence; each effort is torture; all are vain. I find Madame de Senanges upon the rock which I scale, in the cavern where I retire to hide myself. Sometimes I imagine I behold her decked with all her charms, worthy the homage of the entire universe; then all the fires of love rage in my bosom: at others, I

represent her to myself in the days of her misery; I see her ready to expire at my feet, which she waters with her tears; or palpitating under the poniard which I had raised against her breast. The bare recollection wrings from me cries of anguish; I shudder, I weep, and, can you believe it? I feel more wretched in having ceased to feel those transports of fury, than I did in exercising them on her. Oh, God! with what a soul hast thou formed me! Does an excess of sensibility then lead to barbarity! My love inspires me with horror, yet frenzy is in the idea of being cured of it. It is my destiny to be the scourge of her on whom I doat to desperation; it is that of Madame de Senanges to live with me. The altar has received our oaths; I reclaim them; again I seize upon my victim; she is mine; I will make use of my rights, since I cannot make my way to her.

heart. What! whilst I suffer, whilst all my days are marked with anguish and bitterness, shall hers roll on in peace and independence? shall she, who is mine alone, form the delight of all but me? I adore her, and shall she hate me with impunity?—what do I say? perhaps insult my misery in the arms of another! Oh rage! oh madness!—Have pity, my brother, on an unhappy man who loves you, who respects the ties of blood, cherishes the impulses of natural affection, opens his heart to friendship, and who is become ferocious only from having loved too well. A woman whom I have met sometimes in Paris, and who has begged that her name may not be mentioned, writes to me, that Madame de Senanges is more amiable, more beautiful, more invited, and more brilliant in her appearance than ever; however, with all the appearance of the most sincere and disin-

terested zeal, she has insinuated suspicions of the most horrid nature as to her conduct. I believe it all; this hour I depart: I go myself to watch over her; I go again to drink deep of the poison which destroys me. This woman is to receive me privately, and I shall request to see you at her house. Speak not of my project, I conjure you; it requires the most profound secrecy. Who is that Chevalier so assiduous in his attentions to Madame de Senanges? It is the first time any man has been so perseveringly admitted to visit her. What meant that mysterious journey which she took to her country house? All alarms, all irritates me: the volcano has long been fermenting; an irruption must be near. I would be convinced, avenged, appeased, by weeping my vengeance. Woe to that mortal more happy than myself, who shall make me feel by comparison the extent

of my misery ! It has reached its utmost bounds. Am I not become an object of terror to myself ? I demand your pity, your love ; they are my due : am I master of the star which governs me ? am I master of that boiling blood, that ardent fever which has burned in my veins, ever since I knew what it was to feel ? Ah ! when you behold your unfortunate brother, clasp him to your bosom ; but make him no reproaches, offer him no consolations : the first would be odious to him ; the last of no avail.

## LETTER LXXXIX.

FROM THE COMMANDEUR, TO THE  
VICOMTE DE SENANGES.

If my entreaties come not too late, beware of quitting your retirement. What

would you do? Oh, God! into what an abyss are you about to plunge yourself! I believe I can divine who the execrable woman is who has poisoned your mind with suspicions, as well as the motives of that atrocious zeal with which she decks her purposes. The conduct of Madame de Senanges appears to me irreproachable. Must you be epraged because she is at peace? You cannot command your boiling blood, you say! Ah, unhappy man, then allay the ferment by cooling applications.

Your letter has filled me with dread; both for yourself, and for the interesting object whom fate has thrown into your power. Doubtless I should wish to see a reconciliation take place between you and Madame de Senanges, were you to conquer your violent and suspicious temper; but I would myself tear her from your arms, were the same dispo-

sitions to continue. Unfortunate being! has she not already suffered enough? and are you even worthy to love her still? you, who tyrannized over her for seven years, without her having, in all that time, given you one legitimate subject of reproach! Blush and tremble for your newly-revived and groundless transports. I love you, yes, I love you; but I will protect innocence, helplessness, and virtue. Ah, my dear brother! should I have to protect them against you!—Adieu.

## LETTER XC.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

I AM at length certain of the purity of your passion, and mine may now blaze forth. I have received your oaths;

your honor is their guarantee; my friend their witness. I restore you all my confidence; the past is buried in oblivion; the future no longer alarms me; and I dwell with rapture on the present. Heavens! how dear to me is virtue! Your return to its paths has given me the right to tell you to what a degree, to what an excess I love you. Yes, I adore even the evils I have suffered; they form my present security. Another might hesitate perhaps again to trust you; but suspicion is the portion of common minds; generous souls forgive. It is your fault which answers to me for your courage. Besides, you know me; you know that your esteem is more to me than yourself: if I must, of necessity, lose the one or the other, my choice would soon be made, and I should not survive it. Friend of my soul, all the ardors of love glow in this heart; but virtue will never forsake it,



any more than your image. To be worthy of your tenderness, to retain my own esteem and yours, to acquire dignity in my own eyes in order to raise me in yours, these are the motives of my resistance: my firmness is your work; it will surmount every difficulty. Beware how you accuse me of coldness. Can you suspect me of it? of coldness towards you! Ah! were it permitted me to fly into your arms, to open mine to you, to obey an impulse the most sweet; could I do so without remorse, without covering you with my dishonor, without blushing before you, with what transport, with what eager joy should I even outstrip your wishes! I sacrifice myself to duty; murmur not at it: this almost incredible effort of virtue, were it less painful, were it no more than common, would it be made for us? Let us submit to that fate which has not united us. I must re-

spect those chains which weigh me down; you have made them still heavier to me; but nothing can break them; because hatred is the tie which binds me less sacred? That interior voice, that inflexible judge which speaks within us, and which can never be silenced, sometimes disturbs and intimidates me; you, however, prevail against it; and your sway (of what nature then is this uncontrollable sway?) is more powerful still. To that monitor I submit my conduct, my principles, all, except a sentiment which neither Heaven, nor the judgments of men, nor my own efforts can wrest from me. And shall I reproach myself for this? Though mistress of my actions, am I so of my heart? That heart is pure; the guilt would be to yield, not to feel. What you inspire cannot be criminal. The fatal oath pronounced by these lips, why, why was it not to you it

was made? Vain regrets! Our souls are inseparably united; what felicity can equal that? Ah! let us give way to transports sanctioned by innocence: our love is mutual; we are virtuous; we possess all this world can bestow. How supreme is my content! I give myself up to my lover; I no longer dread him; my alarms are dissipated; my soul is tranquil; your empire over it more absolute than ever; you have regained my esteem; I have retrieved my honor; it was one with yours. I believed I had lost it, as soon as you became culpable. Adieu. Were I susceptible of a single thought contrary to the strictest rules of duty, it is to you I should have recourse, to assist me to triumph over it.

## LETTER XCI.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME DE  
SENGES.

WHAT elevation, what dignity, and heroism, breathes through all you have written to me ! You are the sole woman who could thus convert into a precious favor the most cruel of privations. I view your inmost soul, you have opened to me all its treasures. How sublime that soul ! how noble, yet how tender ! Your courage is not imperious or severe ; it attracts, it communicates itself, it invites to imitation. One thought alone mingles bitterness with my felicity. Another than me has possessed your charms ; an atrocious duty has legitimated to you the embraces of a monster ! You have granted to the

most cruel of men, what you have refused to the tenderest of lovers ! But I must banish this idea ; to dwell upon it would destroy all my pleasures. Ah ! your heart, that heart which I possess, which has been untouched but by me, which shrunk within itself, repelled the approaches of all others, it is to me alone it has been given ; yet I desire more ; I am so unreasonable as to express regret ! oh forgive me ! I am beloved ; ought I then to complain ? You have found out the secret of satisfying love, without intrenching on the sanctity of your oath. Oh dreadful oath ! most adored of women, I abhor it, because it holds you in 'bondage ; but I will respect it, to emulate your virtue. Yes, yes, I will render myself worthy of you ; it is my sole wish. I will still treasure next my heart the letter I have just received from you ; and should any impure desires obtrude themselves to lead my heart astray,

I have only to read it over, and it will inspire me with strength to subdue them.—What do you talk of that inflexible judge, which, you say, sometimes alarms you? Ah! what is there with which it can reproach you? Never mention remorse; it is not made for you.

## LETTER XCH.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

FROM a state the most dreadful, I have passed to one of sweet tranquillity; and if the horrible remembrance of what I have suffered, presents itself to my imagination, it is only to make me feel more sensibly the happiness I now enjoy. My own woes are effaced from my recollection; yours alone, those of

which I was the cause, remain written there. I would have renounced you ! I whose heart you are ; who have given you mine with so little reserve, with so much sincerity, that you are the confident, as you are the object, of all my thoughts, my wishes, my pains, ah ! of my sweetest pleasures, and of my every sentiment. Never, never will I seek to reclaim it. In the midst of my despair, whilst endeavouring to hide myself from all nature, or to bury myself in her bosom, distracted, humiliated, I was not less your own. In the depth of misery, I feared to afflict you : I wished to conceal from you a part of what I suffered ; I was ready to expire with my grief, still more with yours, and with the affected contempt with which I thought myself called upon to treat you. Whilst my existence was doubtful, I ceased not to love you, I bowed down before the God

whose altar I sought to overturn. But, say, my friend, can we reason when we feel intensely? Ah! you know but little of the power of love; if you are astonished at its inconsistencies. How often in the same minute do its votaries accuse, repent the accusation; how often become a prey to the impression they detest; encourage the error which destroys them; and the idea which they would reject. At present I am happy. —Alas!—may this delightful calm be as lasting as my love!

### LETTER XCIII.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

It is now two days since I have written to you; you are displeased, and with reason, but you will be still more so, when



you know how I have spent part of that time. I went this morning to visit one of my friends who is a nun : during the whole time I was with her, she ceased not to declaim against love. Can it then be a crime to adore you, beloved of my soul ? No, no, I was far from believing her. We are happy, and Heaven is too just to be offended by our felicity. Have I not sacrificed enough ? Yet, why does my conscience.—Ah ! it alarms my love only to increase it. Should I feel remorse ! I love, yet have not yielded to my lover—from whence then could it arise ? I know not—I only know that you triumph over all remorse, this is more than destroying it. Were I even to be overwhelmed with its weight, I should not wish it less, since it is to you I would sacrifice it. If love is a crime, envy me not the joy of becoming guilty for your sake. The excess of sensibi-

lity, which will perhaps be the torment of my life, will be more dear to me than that life, it will form the felicity of yours. What do I say? I feel that an eternity of pains which would fall only on myself, would not balance in my heart the object of my love; and (may the Sovereign Being who hears me, pardon) sure of his wrath, I should not love you less: I should fear only for you; I should thank his mercy were he to overwhelm me with all evils, were it the means of preserving you from them.

So, you yesterday heard a panegyric on me; and you listened to it with pleasure. It is the last thing which would afford me any. I feel only the praises which are bestowed upon you, and take no joy in those which others deign to afford me, only as they interest you. It is for you alone, it is to please you alone, that I should wish to unite in myself

every charm; and if I feel any envy of superior merit, it is only that I should have more to offer you, not that I should possess more myself.

### BILLET.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

I HATE all which calls my mind from your idea. I should wish to retrench from my life all those moments which I pass at a distance from you; and would prefer a desert, where alone with my lover, I could still behold him, to that insipid crowd with whose homage, whether feigned or real, I am supposed to be so much enchanted.

The mention of a desert puts me in mind of an anecdote which I heard this evening of a man who sat alone in a box

at the opera, and had no suspicion he should be overheard. At the view of the representation of a forest he cried out: *My lovely mistress would I were there with thee!* Happy woman! May she bless the man who was capable of speaking thus! This transport, this emotion of sensibility, he must have stolen from your heart.

## LETTER XCIV.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO THE BARON.

DEAR Baron, how often have I overwhelmed you with my afflictions!—It is but just that I should, at length make you a sharer in my happiness. I have already informed you of my reconciliation with Madame de Senanges; you know the conditions which she annexed to it, and the oath which confirmed

them : I subscribed to all, I obey, I struggle, I suffer, yet am not the less happy. It is a secret peculiar to this unequalled woman, to excite desires the most ardent, and at the same time to restrain them by a charm more sweet if possible, than the felicity they promised. Sometimes I find myself agitated by an inexpressible perturbation in looking at Madame de Senanges ; her visible confusion augments mine ; I no longer see, no longer reason, but am ready to throw myself into her arms. It is then that a single look from her, commanding, though still tender, warns me to stop, and points to me her gratitude as a recompence for the sacrifice ; all unruly passions then subside ; there remains only whilst seated by her side, that emulation of heroism and delicacy, to which I am indebted for all my noblest pleasures. She is far from being insensible of the ardors which I thus suppress.

Sometimes a secret tear steals down her beauteous cheek.—In vain she would hide it from me: can any thing be concealed from the eyes of love! Some women shew apathy even in yielding! what sensibility in her resistance! She unites all the warmth of passion, with all the dignity of virtue. She feels the enthusiasm of love without its weaknesses: she grants me all she ought; and the more painful her duties, the more she thinks herself called upon to fulfil them. Neither artifice, coquetry, nor vain glory, have any share in this conduct: she is ingenuous, because she could have no enjoyment were she no longer so. She is less ambitious of public approbation, than of the secret luxury of being at peace with herself, and ever estimable in the eyes of her lover. Can you conceive any thing more sublime than to behold a woman young, beautiful, and above all, susceptible, sacrifice

her youth, her charms, her passion to the tyrant who persecutes her, and whom she abhors? She hates her husband, she loves me tenderly; she is faithful to the one, and weeps on the bosom of the other, those woes of which she is at once the cause and the victim. But what do I say! she is faithful only to her principles. No, no; it is not M. de Senanges that restrains her.—Oh Heavens!—And this man possesses rights like these over my divine mistress! The idea fills me with indignation; she allowed.—But I will expect all from time and love; perhaps the intoxication of her passion may yet triumph over her cruel resolutions; perhaps—Ah! let me bury within this bosom the guilty wish; that wish still obtruding, still more ardent. Ought I to cherish a thought which could offend the object of my love? Baron, no longer dread any thing from the impetuosity of my youth; all its violence is suppressed,

all subdued. Madame de Senanges purifies the flame which she has kindled ; I am exalted to a level with herself ; my soul has tasted such joy, has been so deliciously employed, that sensations act upon me without its knowledge ; they are all absorbed in sentiment, and I am become accustomed to a happiness which requires nothing more to be entire, lasting, and almost beyond humanity.

How sensible am I of the value of this pure felicity ! with what gratitude do I enjoy it ! A series of days bright and serene, seem to be opening to me in perspective. How soothing is this calm ! I look back with pleasure even to the storm to which it has succeeded.—Adieu, Baron. May every happiness be ever yours ; that of your friend is at length commenced.



## LETTER XCV.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

ON my return home this evening, I received a note from my brother-in-law, which disturbs me excessively. He requests an audience of me to-morrow morning. Ah! what can he have to say to me thus in private? I saw him yesterday, and his manner appeared to me embarrassed and constrained: should it be!—should his 'brother' have employed him to speak to me! should he have in contemplation the dreadful idea of being reconciled to me!—Ah! rather—may death—rather all other torments united await me, than that of being torn from my lover, of returning into bondage, and groaning again under the insupportable

weight of tyranny ! I have been too long its victim, at length I have escaped from it, I have thrown off those chains of iron with which I was bound down by the cruel man who sought to be feared, not loved. Never, never shall entreaties, promises, threats, never shall any thing prevail upon me to renounce the part I have taken. With what eyes could I at present look upon M. de Senanges ? How support his presence, now when he may have some cause to reproach me, when his injustice would no longer be, as formerly, my consolation ? Why did my tenderness for my father silence in me all other sentiments but the fear of offending him ?—It was that fear, it was the timidity of childhood which dragged me to the altar, where I shuddered whilst I swore to cherish him whom I even then dared to detest. Perhaps it was that first error which has been the occasion of all his ; certain of

not being beloved, his rage, his violence, his incredible acts of cruelty were the means he used to avenge himself on my heart, and he thus confirmed a disgust which I could not, which I deigned not to conceal from him. Great God ! what a period of misery ; to what unremitting anguish was your friend, your mistress a prey ! That man made the torment, as you do the charm of my existence. I dread, I abhor him still more since I have known what it is to adore the most amiable of human beings ; his opposite in every quality of the mind and heart. He possessed those horrid rights. — He ! — How does this idea redouble an antipathy which I believed incapable of increase. My new suspicions, his past persecutions, the consciousness of my present offences against him, all unite to render him an object of terror to my soul. Of terror ! say rather of indignation. I could pardon him the tears he

forced me to shed, but never the despotism of his cruel love. It is wounding to the pride and delicacy of a free-born being when attempts are made to enslave the body, instead of conciliating the mind.—But, M. de Senanges—Ah ! may he be happy, but let it be far from me ! I respect myself too much to make the public a party in the subject of my complaints. In whatever manner it may judge me, I will never justify myself at his expence. I will publish nothing to his disadvantage ; and I feel a secret satisfaction in the consciousness, that even at the time when I suffered most from his barbarity, I wished him nothing but happiness : but never more will I live with him. No, no ; never will I quit the protection of the best of men ; I will pass my life under his paternal roof, I will pass it in watch over his ; and if Heaven will deign to hear my prayers, let it abridge my days, could it be the

means of prolonging his. It would be less grievous to me to terminate them than to lose him.—Forgive me, dear friend; I distress you, and alarm myself perhaps without cause; but this note has given me a fever; I shall pass a sleepless night. And then this alarming Commandeur—during these last two or three days, he has had some private conferences with my uncle. In the suspense and anxiety I feel, my heart requires some vent to its fulness. I will now speak of you; I love to let my soul dwell on what makes me thank Heaven for having given me one. Give way to no alarms: you know I sometimes carry my fears, as well as my tenderness to an excess: I would not have you share in the former; allow me only to sooth them by confiding them to you. Leave me my own terrors only, I could not support yours. Direct your imagination only to objects sweet and smiling,

and pity me without afflicting yourself.  
I will write to you to-morrow, whether  
I have any other misfortune to suffer  
than my fears.

### BILLET

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME  
DE SENANGES.

No, no; those presages which agitate  
you will not be realized. The miseries  
they point to are too dreadful for me  
even to dare to imagine them. Ah!  
dissipate your alarms, mingle not bitter-  
ness with the enthusiasm of love, the  
security of happiness, the purity of our  
attachment. From what motives could  
M. de Senanges—But why do I even  
trace his name? I wish only to dwell on  
the happiness of having my pardon  
sealed by you, of our mutual interchange

of hearts, of our being all to each other. How supreme is my felicity ! No, I will fear nothing. But what do I say ! you fear, you tremble, and shall I be tranquil ?—I deceive you ; it is impossible your heart should feel a pain with which mine would not vibrate ! I will see you to-night, when I hope all your anxieties will be dissipated.

## LETTER XCVI.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

OH my friend ! what a dreadful scene have I gone through ! I had reason to be alarmed ; my presages did not deceive me. Impatient to know what the Commandeur had to say to me, I went, according to appointment, to his house, and hastened immediately to his apart-

ment ; the first object which struck my sight on entering it, I tremble yet with the recollection, was my persecutor, my tyrant, the man to whom I was constrained to swear love, but who used every means to excite my hate ; the being whose presence never failed to inspire me with terror ; in one word, M. de Senanges. Heavens ! what a moment ! I believed myself once more in his power : the horrid oath which bound me, my past misfortunes, my transgression (if it is one to be susceptible) on seeing him all rushed at once upon my mind ; and my love itself could have acquired fresh strength from it, if any thing could have added to its force. Trembling, dismayed, I thought I saw my tomb open to receive me, I imagined I felt the barbarian drag me from life, snatch me from you. I extended my arms as if towards my lover, I sought him in all around me, and in my distrac-



tion, would perhaps have demanded him of M. de Senanges himself, had I not fallen senseless at his feet. On my return to life, I found him at mind; with one of my hands pressed between his; shuddering with horror I withdrew it from his grasp; it is no longer his.—I own no other master now but Heaven and you.

“Madame,” said he, “my presence terrifies you; this effect is equally my fault and my torment. I have persecuted you; love when driven to desperation becomes cruel. Your indifference was the source of my frenzy; your mildness could not calm it; your virtue did not shelter you from my jealousy. I was suspicious, unjust, and—hated; you were sufficiently avenged; but to please you, I will subdue myself. I have regretted, I have adored you unceasingly; I love you more than ever. Vouchsafe to pardon me, return with me, render

me worthy of you, and you will restore my lost happiness. I shall set out for my country house within two days, may I expect you will accompany me?"

These last words re-animated my drooping courage. "No, Monsieur," answered I, "no, I will not accompany you; I am penetrated with gratitude for your love; I remember not your faults, but I have that of not being suited to you; I never can be so; we should be the mutual cause of misery to each other; our characters do not sympathize; nature forbade our union, and reason has dissolved it. You have permitted me to live with my uncle, allow me still to remain under his protection."

He interrupted me with eagerness, and in a furious tone: "I know," said he, "I know the cause of your refusal—I am informed of it, better informed than you imagine. If I have dissembled

thus far, a remains of tenderness for you prompted me to it. I wished to avoid a public clamor disgraceful to us both; but when I promised you should live in peace with an offended husband, I deceived you; if your chains seemed heavy to you at the time when I could esteem you, they will now oppress you with redoubled weight.—You have lost the right to complain; I have acquired that of being inhuman, yet just. Tremble at my wrath; I love you, you are unworthy of it; I will punish at once your offences, and my own weakness; you will not have long to await the effects of my vengeance.”—“I will await them undismayed,” replied I; “I esteem you too much to dread you.”

He scarcely waited to listen to me, but rushed furiously out of the apartment followed by the Commandeur. After having in vain attempted to appease him, the latter returned, very much

alarmed by his intreaties. I reproached him warmly for having led me into such a snare. "What could I do?" said he; "my brother on his knees conjured me to procure him a meeting with you, without informing you of it. It was with much reluctance I consented to it, but his entreaties were so urgent, he appeared so sincerely penitent for what was past, so distracted with his love, and swore to me so many oaths that you should have reason to be satisfied with the interview, that at length I was prevailed upon to comply."

The Commandeur is amiable, but he is weak; he loves his brother; and wishes me to return to him. I ought to do so, he says. Ah my God! and to whom do I owe this sacrifice? to the world? It may condemn, but cannot influence me. To M. de Senanges? he has lost all power over me, from his abuse of it; my heart disclaims his authority; he

is no longer any thing to me—No, Heaven has not decreed me so much misery. I trust that I am justified in the eyes of the Supreme Being, and have acted up to my duty, in pardoning the tyrant whilst I fly the tyranny. Every thing concurs to place a barrier between us. I love you; an offence against him of the last magnitude; could I then live with him upon such terms? Could I abandon you! so adored, so worthy of being so? oh never! Shall I go to deluge with my tears those places where you do not inhabit; those places where I must, even before I expire with my grief, find a hell in his arms!—At an age when the heart cannot judge for itself, trembling I pronounced a vow which even then was, which ever since has been hateful to me; he who only sought to strain with harshness the tie which it formed, has broken it. My heart has made its choice; the crime would be to betray my lover; to you alone do I owe fidelity.

## LETTER XCVII.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME,  
DE SENANGES.

OH most courageous, most persecuted,  
but certainly most beloved of women !  
You have then had resolution to with-  
stand the entreaties, the menaces, the  
violence of the tyrant who would have  
snatched you from me ! Repent not the  
effort : love will support us in the con-  
flict—our hearts are so much the more  
firmly united, as virtue alone forms the  
tie which binds them. Yes, barbarian !  
vain are thy attempts, thou canst not  
wrest from us the immortal sentiment  
which animates us. Oh horrid vice of  
our legislation ! every where shackles,  
prejudices, misfortune ! the heart ever  
revolting against the law ! tyranny ever

sacred, whatever form it assumes, and the sentiments of nature prostituted to the vilest conventions of men !

Women have reason on their side when they betray, when they asperse and defame a sex imperious, cruel, and despotic, who subject to harsh restrictions, beings of sensibility ; reduce them to the hard necessity either to suffer or to deceive ; punish them for their miseries ; and avenge upon them the crimes themselves commit. A young and timid female, trembling under the authority of a father, advances to the altar as a victim to the sacrifice. Respect and fear, force from her the fatal irrevocable words interrupted by her sobs ; and thus is she loaded with chains never to be shook off, because an oath has escaped her lips which it was horrible to exact from her, and from which her heart recoiled at the very moment it was pronounced ! Yours remained free in spite of parental au-

thbrity, and the fetters of custom: you have given it to me, it is my property, my treasure, my life; I will defend it against all the powers of nature. Ah! what remaining claims does your despot possess? Your promise is annulled; your inexperience was taken unawares at an age which knows neither how to resist, to struggle, nor above all, to foresee. Can the heart be disposed of without the consent of reason? But, alas! how useless are such reflections! Perhaps at this very moment your persecutor labors to disunite us, and prepares the dagger which is to immolate us both. How do I tremble at the idea! Should he wrest you from my love, he breaks all the ties which restrain me, he leaves a field open to my fury; from that moment I behold in him only an unworthy rival, not the mortal you commanded me to respect! his blood, or mine—Ah! pardon, pardon the emo-



tions of a rage which I can scarcely repress;—but which, notwithstanding, shall be sacrificed to you. The monster! he is sacred to you, and, oh Heavens! he must be so to me—and that precious, that consoling right of offended men, vengeance, is interdicted me by love! Well then, should your husband—hated title!—should he proceed to the extremities we dread, I will go, yes, I will go and throw myself at his feet, and myself assure him of your spotless innocence; mine will be the voice of truth, and it shall convince him, or I will die by my own hand, if not by his.—You may perceive the anguish I suffer. Your letter has distracted me; I am at once a prey to terror, to concentrated indignation, and to the tenderest love.—Alas! how short-lived was the calm which we enjoyed, and on which I felicitated myself so much! I was so blind! and I thought it

was to last for ever ! But you love me, and I am so still.—This happiness is independent of earth, of Heaven, of all the storms of fate.—Adieu.

### BILLET.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

WHAT a piece of intelligence have I learned, on awaking this morning !—Heavens !—Last night !—precisely at the hour on which you left me—two men have fought—this is what my people have heard this morning, and have repeated to me.—Should it be !—Great God ! I dare not impart my suspicions to you, so fraught are they with horror.—Write to me ; tell me all the truth, I command you ; I will know the worst.—Suspense kills me.

## BILLET.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME  
DE SENANGES.

THE adventure of last night has had no alarming consequences. Since you exact it of me, I will relate it to you, just as it happened. On quitting you as the weather was fine, I preferred walking, and desired that my carriage should follow. I had got on at some distance before it, when a man darted like a fury out of the little street nearest to your house, calling out to me to defend myself. He had his sword in his hand, and I instantly drew mine; my domestics hearing the clash of arms, ran up. In vain I enjoined them silence, they called on all sides, with the utmost vociferation. My adversary finding his measures

thus broken in upon, precipitated himself into the street from whence he had come out, and disappeared. I stepped into my carriage, and proceeded home, surprised, but very little disturbed by this event. It must have been some person who mistook me for another, and on perceiving his error, feared being discovered; this is the manner in which I explain this rencontre. Resume your composure: in the same proportion as my life is dear to you, I shall ever have the courage to defend it.

### BILLET.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

HERE are two days past without my having seen you; I am dying with anxiety.—What is the cause of this

mysterious absence? Explain it to me; your billets too have something constrained and inexplicable in them.—

What am I to think, what believe?—All which presents itself to my imagination makes me tremble; deceive me not.

This morning Dumont appeared all alarm.—Friend of my soul, are you—

I shudder, and dare not finish the sentence.—My tears flow in spite of me.

Remove my fears; I am in despair.

## LETTER XCVIII.

FROM THE SAME, TO THE SAME.

It was himself!—I divined it! Your domestic knew him, and informed you of it; you had no doubts as to the person, although you feigned to me not to believe any thing of it.

Ah cruel friend! I know all, and I

sink beneath it.—The dreadful gloom of night surrounds me. Yes, I sent for Dumont, but I insist on your saying nothing to him on the subject. He was not able to resist my entreaties ; he told me all, and I thought that moment would have cost me my life. Oh you who are infinitely more to me than that, you are wounded ; perhaps in danger.—M. de Senanges—The barbarian ! how well did he know my heart ! the more effectually to rend it, it was not my bosom which he pierced ; I had not the power to direct towards myself the stroke which has given me a thousand deaths !—It is now that this man is become my tormentor. He leaves me to live, that I may at once feel accumulated woes ; alas !—the misery of being united to him, and the despair of trembling for you.

Three days ago, in parting with you, how far was I from foreseeing what was

to happen. And it is I who idolize you, I am the cause of this horrid event ! But for me, your days would have been happy, nothing would have disturbed their repose ; it is I who have assassinated you. Why have you known me ? You have given me a new existence, and your blood flows for me ! for one who would pay with the last drop of mine a single tear of yours ! Who could have informed M. de Senanges ? How could he know ?—Ah ! what does he know ? He never possessed any share of my heart ; I deprive him of nothing ; all of me that was his, I have refused to love—to you ! What could I do more ? it matters not however ; the cruel man is my husband ; and I should entreat of you the most profound secrecy on the subject of his furious attack, had not your generosity anticipated my wishes.

I shall myself be the bearer of my letter, I hasten to you ; nor he, nor any cir-

cumstances, nor any perils, shall deter me; the blame of the whole universe, the anger of Heaven itself, all collected woes pour upon my head, I shall brave them all to fly to you. I have obeyed decorums, I have been the victim of duty; but you suffer, and I no longer acknowledge their sway. My incertitude, my distraction, my grief—In another hour I will know all—I shall see you. I have no longer strength to write. I come.—

## LETTER XCIX.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME DE  
SENANGES.

I BLESS my wound, my sufferings; I bless even the rage of M. de Senanges; it is to that I owe the most exquisite pleasure I have ever enjoyed. You



have come to seek me in the chamber of pain; I have beheld you seated by my bed side; I have seen your tears flow! felicity could not extend further. Repent not of a step which does you honor; every thing becomes ennobled by sentiment. There are a thousand women more attached to decorums than to virtue; but there are few who, like you, would break through the shackles of etiquette, and despise the blame which may be thrown on an action, when they are certain they have reason to be proud of its motive! Yes, you have done what I thought beyond the reach of possibility, you have added to my admiration. How thankful am I to fate, that, in my adventure with M. de Senanges, the advantage rested with him! Had I shed a drop of his blood, I should have raised a barrier between us two.—Ah! much rather would I he had shed all that circles in these veins!

Fear no more the rage of your husband ; doubtless he has exhausted it all on me. What happiness do I now taste ! I am entirely cured : this is the effect of your presence.

### BILLET.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

I CAN say nothing to you to-night, which will not be gloomy as myself ; I am not yet recovered from the agitation occasioned by the events which have for some days past marked my destiny. Why then write to you ?—Alas ! that I may converse with you, tell you how much I love you ; to make up to myself in some measure for the shortness of the time we could pass together, and charm away my re-

gret for being separated from you. Here are many fine reasons, when two words only were necessary ; I write to you because I must, because it is the impulse of my heart, its pleasure, its consolation. It is two hours after midnight, and I cannot prevail on myself to go to bed : I am penetrated with a secret terror. I fear to lose a single one of those moments in which I can assure you of my love.

## BILLET.

FROM THE SAME, TO THE SAME.

A LETTRE de cachet ! an order from the King !—I shall see you no more. Oh, God ! all is over !—Of what crime am I then guilty ?—Pity me ; but take care of yourself, yield not to affliction ; and, above all, respect the life of M. de Se-

nanges, or you lose me past recovery.—They drag away your mistress, your friend.—Where? to what place?—I know not; but your image, my love, and my innocence shall accompany me there. I will carry with me your letters, your portrait, the sole treasures which interest me, the sole which I shall henceforward possess; I abandon all others. They will scarcely allow me time to write to you—my distraction, my tears.—When you receive my letter, when you shall have learned—Merciless fate! I will pardon thee all, if thou wilt spare the object of my love! Adieu. I adore you; live to love me. Adieu, adieu. Dreadful word! perhaps it is the last I shall ever bid you.—Beloved of my heart! I shall die.—No, be at peace; I shall take care of that life which is dear to you.

## LETTER C.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO THE BARON.

HONOR, virtue, decency, nothing is sacred.—Weep, Baron, weep with me the crime of our laws, the subversion of principles; the outrage done to love, to friendship, to every sentiment of nature. They have borne away your friend, they have torn from me her whom my soul adored.—Madame de Senanges is shut up in a convent; she has been there for eight days past. In the first moments of this horrid catastrophe, I was not able to inform you of it; I was insensible even to the force of the woes which assailed me; my eyes saw not, my trembling hand could trace no characters; my despair was stupid and gloomy. Inhuman Senanges, merciless

tiger, who tearest me piece-meal, art thou satisfied? is thy rage yet glutted? We shall no longer behold that adorable woman! she is lost to society: the world exists no more for her. Her tears flow in solitude, without a sympathizing bosom to receive them.

Baron, this idea overpowers me, I cannot support it. Ah! when that man attacked me with all the frenzy of rage, why did he not plunge his sword at once into my heart? why did he not enjoy my last sigh? Whence comes it that I still exist? But, what do I say? —Alas! were I no more, what heart would be left to beat in unison with that of Madame de Senanges? who would answer responsive to her groans? She suffers! let me too live to suffer; my misfortune surpasses hers, that is my sole consolation.

My friend, I could not prevail upon myself to yield you credit, when you

expressed suspicions of Madame d'Ercy. —I now find it is she, I shudder at the conviction ! it is she who has been the author, the instigator of all ; it was she who informed M. de Senanges, who received him privately, who conspired my destruction. I have written to upbraid and to confound her. She has even carried her malignity so far as to point out the Convent de \*\*\*\*, the Abbess of which is her relation. Cruel woman ! it is beneath the lustre of charms the most seducing, that she conceals a heart the most atrocious. Beauty, thou illusive meteor, henceforth I shall detest thee, since thou hast served as a mask to a heart false and depraved ! And I have loved this woman ! I have loved her who has been the means of such an outrage against Madame de Senanges ! I am constrained to respect the life of the wretch who assassinates her ! She com-

manded me to do so before her departure! I must submit to her decrees! I must—Can you conceive, Baron, a situation more dreadful?

But this is not all; I wound the fame of her I love, by endeavoring to defend it. I hear virtue itself defamed, and I only add to the weight which oppresses it, by raising my voice in its favor! I am surrounded by men weak and cruel; who, far from shedding a tear over the victim, encourage those who stab it to the heart; by women inaccessible to mercy, impenetrable as the lifeless statue to all the softer virtues, and only re-animated by the desire of seeing others suffer; and whose vanity enjoys with transport the misfortune of her who eclipses them all—Ah, Baron, is this a world to live in? and must my duties still connect me with it? No; I will quit it, I will fly society; Madame de Senanges is no longer its ornament, and I can perceive only its vices.



Sacred being, tender object of my grief and pity ! thou, whose superior soul is known to me, whose courage far surpasses mine ! here do I swear to thee, that thy miseries shall attach me still more strongly to thee ; my love shall feed on its melancholy, take a pleasure in its agonies : till the last sigh shall rend this heart, shall my life be devoted to thee. May my groans penetrate the anticipated tomb which has closed upon thee ! May they answer to thee for the fidelity of him whose soul worships thee !

Dear Baron.—She may be also assured of your warmest sympathy.—She is unfortunate, you will love her the more for it ; you will never cease to esteem her.

Heavens ! what will become of me ? It is impossible my letters can reach her ; yet still do I employ all my moments in writing to her ; if it answers

no other purpose, it satisfies myself; I pour out the effusions of my heart, I address myself to hers; I dress in language my deep-rooted passion, and it seems as if the paper itself became animated by the expression of my love.

But, Baron, can no means be devised to free Madame de Senanges from her imprisonment? Is all at an end, for her happiness, and for mine? Shall her eyes no more meet the glances of her lover? You have still preserved some connections in the great world, who may have it in their power to serve her, who may give weight to the claims of virtue, support your petitions, and confound injustice. Speak, act, persuade; I sieze this ray of hope: my respectable friend, I shall owe every thing to you.

If there yet exists beings of sensibility, Madame de Senanges will find protectors. You will inspire them with

your soul, you will move them by your eloquence; you will dry the tears of two lovers, and you will be the god of friendship.

## LETTER CI.

FROM THE MARCHIONESS D'ERCY, TO  
THE CHEVALIER.

REALLY, Chevalier, one is not prepared for such attacks as these. I am yet all agitation from the effects of your reproaches: you are dreadfully pathetic, and if this humor continues, you will become absolutely the bane of society. Do you not know that I have miserable nerves, which the veriest trifle discomposes? they centre in my heart, and that is so exquisitely feeling, that every thing in the world affects it: and you come with your grief, to throw yourself,

without any ceremony, athwart my sensibility. I can conceive your agonies, but it is indiscreet in you to overwhelm me with them ; because you are wretched, it is not therefore necessary I should be suffocated. For instance, you accuse me of having had a hand in the horrible offence M. de Senanges has been guilty of against his wife : how can you think it possible I should not be deeply wounded by such an imputation ? What, I not respect your loves ! I assist in snatching from you the object of your affections ! Is it my fault, if the divinity you adore has a husband who is sometimes subject to jealous freaks ? It is true, this last is somewhat violent, the man is become rather difficult to be borne with, and I can imagine nothing more vexatious to you than the manner in which he conducts himself ; but am I responsible for it ? When these wicked husbands

have once taken it into their heads to be displeased that their wives should entertain lovers, there is no prevailing on them to listen to reason. What then would you have ? there is nothing to be done but to groan over the fate of those unfortunate beings, whom unreasonable people thus persecute. I have received M. de Senanges privately, you say ; oh the curious idea ! It would have been the first time I have ever used discretion in any thing. Believe me, I have received him without any mystery ; I have seen him, because such was my fancy ; he is amusing to me, with his transports and his despair.

One day, when he was swelling with rage (I like to see him so), he told me he intended shutting his wife up. One does not mind starts of passion of this nature, you know ; he was in too great a fury for me to attempt contradicting

him, so I contented myself with groaning inwardly. You would not have had me provoke him to strangle me! I say, again, it is past a doubt that this untoward incident must have deranged you horribly. — But we must have patience, my dear Chevalier.

Do you know, however, that your situation is not without its favorable side, and even very advantageous for you. Had Madame de Senanges continued in the world, you would, it is a certain consequence, have been familiarized with her charms (one finds it so in every thing), she would have become less fascinating in your eyes: this catastrophe renews at the same time her attractions and your passion. A woman is never so beautiful as when seen in perspective; the imagination is heated; it heightens all the advantages she does possess, and lends her all those she does not. Besides, a little vex-

ation is not unbecoming ; we all of us contract from it a sort of tender languor, which is an additional weapon with which coquetry arms itself, and which interests, from the variety it gives to beauty.

There is, too, another motive of consolation : some women, who are never spoken of when always in our sight, as soon as they disappear, become the subjects of all conversations ; those who have not shared their favors triumph ; those who had made arrangements to obtain them, are in despair. Their rivals exaggerate their transgressions, or overwhelm them with their pity. They employ people's thoughts, they become of some importance ; I will even go further, and declare that I think, for my part, that it is very desirable to live in a convent ; nay, I am serious ; provided the confinement there is not of very long duration, one may derive

much benefit from the situation. It shocks us at first; but it has its charms, when we become accustomed to it, like a thousand other things.

It is in thus extending the ideas, that we place ourselves beyond the power of events; but you are gloomy to a most distressing degree; your heart is become an abyss, one dare no longer approach it. Be comforted, my poor Chevalier; and, above all, write me no more such doleful epistles; those kind of lamentations wring my heart, distract my head. If you change not your style, I must decline any longer reading your productions; and you must feel that this would be to me the most mortifying of all privations.



## LETTER CII.

FROM THE BARON, TO THE CHEVALIER.

I MAKE you no more reproaches, my dear Chevalier; I no longer reason, I weep. Yes, believe me, your austere friend can give tears to misfortune. That of Madame de Senanges is dreadful; and yours—Ah! whilst you two suffer, there is no longer any happiness for me. Doubt not I shall strain every nerve. I had broken off all intercourse with people in power, and with those who are the repositories of court favor: but I will renew all my connections, in the hope of being useful to you. I have already written to the lady of the Marechal de \*\*\*\*. She is a woman of virtue, without severity; she does not judge from appearances, and will give

credit to my representations : besides this, she has the greatest influence over public affairs, and I am certain of interesting her in favor of the charming woman so oppressed. I have another project too, which must succeed, if Senanges has not lost every sentiment of humanity. Well, did I augur falsely? Was I not right, when I labored to deter you from an attachment which could not fail of having the most fatal consequences? But let us not look back.— How much do I pity you ; how much am I myself to be pitied ! In vain did I flatter myself, that, in my retreat, I should enjoy my future life with a heart at rest ; mine is no longer tranquil, no longer under my own control ; you dispose of it, your sighs are all re-echoed by it. The flowers of my fields, the shade of my woods, have no more charms for me ; your sufferings have withered, have poisoned all. We

may rise superior to the strokes of fate :  
but where is the callous being who can  
remain insensible to the sorrows of a  
friend ?

### LETTER CIII.

FROM MADAME DE \*\*\*\*, TO THE  
CHEVALIER DE VERSENAI.

THE barbarians ! they have torn her  
from you ! they have snatched from me  
my friend ! What had she done to  
provoke this cruelty ? Oh, my dear  
Chevalier ! the intelligence has reached  
me here in the country, where I now  
reside. Every one speaks of it after  
their own manner ; some in favor of  
Madame de Senanges, others in that  
of her husband ; these last are monsters.  
Ah ! were you to hear me ! When  
any one begins to contradict me on the

subject, I get into a rage.—Do they persist, my tears flow, and I find I persuade more by this mute and tender eloquence than by all my reasonings. I cannot bear to see those around me laugh; the aspect of happiness shocks me; for my friend is in tears. Alas! why have you loved her? why not respected her peace? I quarrel with you, myself, with the whole universe; she suffers, all are to blame for it. The most courageous sacrifice of the most tender passion, for this is she punished! She is not known, her virtue is beyond the conception of common minds, and she is calumniated! She is the sport of a world which ever confounds guilt and misfortune. She is made to pay dearly for her charms: alas! even her virtues are denied her. My heart is full, and I pour it out to you: I require it to assuage my anguish. Dear unfortunate friend! how shall I contrive to

write to her? Doubtless, the strictest orders are given to prevent any letters reaching her; but what are the obstacles which love will not surmount? Should you succeed in doing so, oh! my dear Chevalier, be to her the interpreter of my grief, of my despair; tell her, I beseech you, that all which has happened has only added, if that were possible, to the sentiments of the tenderest friendship; tell her, repeat it to her a hundred times, that I love her, I esteem her more than ever. Yes, yes, the greater the outrages she has to struggle against, the more I am attached to her. I know her virtue, and I pay it homage. Whilst she enjoyed and diffused happiness all around her, she was dear to my heart: since she has been persecuted, it holds her sacred. Alas! why cannot I penetrate into her retreat, partake her solitude, and prove to her, by the most assiduous cares, that the unfortunate may still

preserve a friend ! I glory in being hers ! Send me some news of her ; until I hear it, I shall languish in misery, and look with abhorrence on every thing which presents itself to my view. The scenes of the country appear odious to me ; in all its charming landscapes, I behold only Madame de Senanges, abandoned, weeping, separated from all she loves ; and I enjoy, with regret, a liberty, which so forcibly recalls to my mind her slavery. What says the good M. de Valois ?—How much do I pity him !—I await your reply in agonies. My sole, my respectable, my beloved friend ! to what are you now exposed ? Cruel and unjust mankind !—Adieu. I give way to all the tenderness of my grief, without considering that yours has no need of addition. What shall I say ? the heart which I know to be the most attached to Madame de Senanges, is that into which I love to pour the effusions of my regret for having lost her.

# LETTER CIV.

FROM THE BARON, TO THE VICOMTE  
DE SENANGES.

You will be surprised, at first, Vicomte, at the liberty I take in addressing you on the subject I now do; but read my letter through, and if you then disapprove, it will be time enough for me to repent of the step.

I knew Madame de Senanges whilst yet a child; I was frequently the guest of her father; and I pursued, with attentive pleasure, the gradual opening of her pure, elevated, and energetic mind. I loved her as if she had been my daughter; and had she any of those faults which are the common lot of humanity, the bandage of parental love

had so many folds, as to hide them all from my view.

During the first years of your marriage, you permitted me to see her. I have many times opened your eyes to her great qualities. More than once I repressed the first transports of your jealous rage ; you at first received my expostulations with fury, but in the end with gratitude. At present, the mischief is done; but he who repairs his faults is no longer guilty ; and the evil even for which we blush is a precious lesson, and turns to the account of virtue. In whatever light you may view me, an uninterested man, a resident of the country, remote from connections, interests, or intrigues of state, and who, from the bosom of his retreat, lifts his voice in favor of your wife, can only be your friend. It is in that character I now speak to you, it is in that character you ought to listen to me.



I have learned, by public report, that you have had Madame de Senanges carried off, and placed in a convent. I demand of you, and do you ask your own heart, Vicomte, what is her crime? I see from hence the rage with which you prepare to answer me; but it is to your reason that I address myself: the former acts blindly, it is the latter which judges. Again I ask, what is the transgression which you thus punish in your wife? Wedlock united you, for your misfortune and hers. Wedlock imposes duties; she fulfilled them all: it demands sacrifices; recollect those she has made: but you would possess her love. Ah! be just; can love be compelled? can its impulse be directed by authority? know you a power, Vicomte, that can control the irresistible instinct of nature? It is that which produces the charm that human institutions often contradict; it is that which

tells the heart what is wanting to its happiness; it is that which forms dreams of felicity in the youthful female mind; but what must be the disappointment, when a sad reality gives the lie to those sweet chimeras which had been so fondly cherished! What could you expect from Madame de Senanges more than virtue? The disparity of your ages necessarily excluded sympathy, that secret tie of hearts, as contracts are of fortunes. Madame de Senanges looked up to you as a guide who was to conduct her, who would preserve her from the hidden rocks of life, who would place in her hand the clue which was to lead her through the labyrinth into which she was entered; but this guide must be her friend. What has he done to become so?

When will parents cease to immolate their daughters to the mean calculations of avarice, to people society with mar-

ried pairs hateful to each other, with neglected children, with tyrants and their victims ?

There are moments in which I am tempted to defend women, even in the excesses of their misconduct. Their days of youthful happiness are cut short by bitter regrets ; they are condemned to the most rigorous duties, at an age all alive to sensibility. The heart which has been deceived in its fondest hopes, becomes soured by disappointment, and revolts against an enforced subjection ; that same sensibility which in them had been but a simple impulse, the pledge of their innocence becomes an imperious and unbridled passion which degrades them, over which they themselves weep, and whose dictates they follow, only that they may be, even in their depravities, still obedient to the voice of nature.

Vouchsafe to answer me. Has Madame de Senanges ever permitted herself

to be led away by examples of this nature? During seven years that she lived with you, could the piercing eye of jealousy discover a single failure in duty? She groaned beneath your inflections without even thinking of escaping from them. Must those stifled groans, sad consolation of the timid sufferer, serve as pretexts to accuse her?

Wearied with your persecutions, and with your miseries, even more than her own, she proposed a separation, to which you consented; since that time she has lived at Paris, under the eyes of her uncle in the most irreproachable manner; and it is after this short period of tranquillity, that her life is to become more tempestuous than ever.

You give ear to unfounded reports, you convert conjectures into realities, you allow your mind to be poisoned by suspicions, and without further proofs, you injure, you imprison, you mark with

public disgrace a virtuous being, who has in every situation supported her own dignity, nor ever made use of your offences against her, as a pretext to authorize any weaknesses in herself. I know you believe the contrary ; but I am better informed upon this subject than you, and I would undeceive you. If Madame de Senanges has been susceptible to love, she has from thence a further claim upon your gratitude, she has sacrificed to you her passion ; of this I have the most undeniable certainty, and I should deem myself highly culpable, did I not boldly assert a truth which may serve the cause of innocence. Believe me, I should not undertake to defend her, were her conduct even equivocal.

Be again yourself, Vicomte ; restore to your wife her fame, her liberty ; these are her due, these you cannot wrest from

her without being guilty of barbarity, without laying up for yourself eternal remorse. Confess aloud that you have been deceived. How noble, how worthy yourself will such an acknowledgment be ! What a forcible impression must it make on the heart of Madame de Senanges ! you are at present wretched, you will cease to be so. Did you but know the solace a great action bestows ? But you do know it, you are generous : you want only a friend who has firmness enough to put a curb on those unruly passions which run away with you from yourself. Shall I not prevail ? Must the beautiful Madame de Senanges, whom you have loved, whom you still love, continue to languish in the gloom of a cloister ? Is that the tomb you have prepared for her ? Must she enter it a living victim, and be dragged thither by you ? No, you will be more hu-

mane. I feel, by the tears which flow from my eyes, that you are yourself softened.

### LETTER CV.

FROM THE VICOMTE DE SENANGES, TO  
THE BARON.

I APPROVE of all you say to me, Baron, but I cannot act as you advise. It is by the force of misfortune, that my soul is become inflexible. I believe the virtue of Madame de Senanges to be unsullied, I have even the fullest conviction of it; but the more perfect this conviction, the less can I prevail upon myself to retract. Had she really injured me, I should pardon her perhaps sooner than I can pardon my own cruelties, my own injustice produced by her indifference. I feel all the fires of love, and I am hated!—ks.

she not then sufficiently guilty? Must I then suffer alone? No. She thinks of me only with horror; but she shall at least think of me. Her pangs shall recal my image; that diabolical enjoyment is become pleasing to a heart wrung by despair, which can obtain no other.

Believe me, more than once have I melted with pity, for the punishment myself have decreed; but this tenderness would turn to rage, did I imagine it were known to her. I weep over her chains provided only they shall never be broken. As to myself, I have a hope still remaining; it is that I shall very soon cease to be: hope did I say! I have a certain presage of it, and I dwell on the idea with delight. Yes, that same man who lives but to torment her, wishes for death only as the termination of her torments. Can you believe it? at this very moment whilst I write to you, my tears flow, yet still I persist in



my resolution. I imprecate Heaven for having given me such a soul. How fiercely do its passions blaze ! how deep felt the pangs which assail it ! Your letter has had all the effect upon me it could have ; it has softened, but not changed me.—Adieu. I am less avenged than punished.

## LETTER CVI.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO THE BARON.

WHAT a moment of regret, of intoxication, of grief, of delight have I experienced ! After what I have done for love, there remains only for me to make friendship a sharer in my transports.—To day, my heart would exhaust all its pleasures.—I have seen her—yes, I have beheld her. The grates, the bolts which confine her, the moats which surround

her, all have been vain to hide her from my view. I have seen her, conceive my rapture! This adventure has been accompanied by some interesting circumstances, and I neither can nor would conceal any of them from you.

The day before yesterday, in a fit of the most gloomy melancholy, abhorring the duties to which my situation bound me, and the bustle of a court, which made me feel more sensibly the solitude of my own heart; weary of all, a burthen to myself, I suddenly formed the resolution of flying, of quitting a tumultuous world, and of seeking the desert where languished, a prey to misery, the sole object which could still attach me to existence. I threw myself into my chaise accompanied by the honest Dumont, and set out for the village of \*\*\*; which is about twenty leagues distant from Paris, and half a one from the convent where Madame de Senanges is con-

lined. I alighted at the first inn we came to, and left Dumont there with orders to await my return without any solicitude as to the length or shortness of my stay; and alone I took my way to the fatal spot, the only end of my journey. Ah! Baron, what an abode!

On one side is the perspective of a forest rude and wild, the growth of ages; on the other frowns over it, a bleak and barren hill, with here and there a few fir trees scattered over it, whose dark foliage only saddens the scene. From this height, with a terrifying noise, a fall of water precipitates itself, and seems to roar, rather than murmur along the bottom.

The horizon, every where bounded, offers nothing to the view but gloom. One could almost imagine that the beams of Heaven feared to shew themselves to the ungrateful and sterile soil. This asylum seems as if destined for the

last confinement of criminals, and it is virtue that inhabits its recesses, it is Madame de Senanges who is there immured !

When I arrived at the confines of the enclosure, the day was on the decline, a dreadful blast howled through the air, every thing served to aggravate to me the horror of the picture which presented itself. I stopped at some distance from this prison, to measure with my eyes the height of the walls which defended it. This object whilst it alarmed, fixed, rivetted me ; I remained immoveable, buried in the contemplation, hoping still that I might be perceived by Madame de Senanges.

Perhaps at this moment, said I to myself, I occupy her thoughts. She dreams not I am so near her ; and whilst so small a space separates us, she groans for my absence.—Sympathies of love, speak to her imagination, warn her heart, tell

her that her lover now wanders around her retreat !

I was absorbed in this idea, when I saw come out from one of the gates of the convent, a young peasant of an open, lively, and engaging countenance ; and by the implements of labor which he carried, I guessed him to be the gardener of the house. He advanced towards a cottage which was a few paces from him, and which I had before remarked ; a woman who appeared to be his wife sat spinning at its entrance ; labor and the vicissitudes of the seasons had not impaired the delicacy of her features or complexion : a child blooming with health played by her side. At the first glimpse she had of her husband she flew to meet him. Their little boy, who could already run, at an age when ours can scarcely step, was as soon as she in the arms of its father, who kissed and caressed both in their turns ; and thus

found in the joyful smiles of those innocent beings the recompence of all his labors.

This scene which at any other time would have expanded my heart, now contracted all its feelings within the narrow bounds of self; the reflections it gave birth to were wholly personal.

"They love each other," said I; "they enjoy the charms of nature, and the sentiments she inspires. They love without being disturbed in their attachment. Even their simple habits of life ensure their felicity; whilst Madame de Senanges—whilst I!"

As I pronounced these words a sigh escaped me, which heard by these good people, made them regard me with more marked attention.—I perceived this, and involuntarily withdrew from their examination, in spite of I know not what secret instinct which would have attracted me towards them. The unhappy,

I believe, Baron, insensibly contract a degree of misanthropic fierceness which shrinks from social intercourse. They brood over their woes, and tremble lest they should be divined.—

The shades of night now began to gather thick around; I fled into the recesses of the forest, and would you believe it? the darkness, the silence, interrupted only by the hollow murmur of winds, or the dashing of the distant cataract, the horrors of the place, nor the risk which I ran, being unprovided with any kind of arms, nothing had power to free me from the magic charm which retained me there. I past the entire night in traversing the awful space, my thoughts wholly detached from self.— I was, if I may so express myself, guarded by misery. It seems as if the nightly depredator would respect the existence of the mortal pursued by fate, or that fate itself refuses to yield up its victim.

I now approached the convent, again plunged into the depths of the wood, whilst I gave a free course to my meditations.

On a sudden the toll of a death-bell resounded through the air. I started with affright; a chilling sensation pervaded my whole frame. I was ready to expire. My gloomy and terrified imagination represented to me Madame de Senanges dying, sinking beneath the weight of her afflictions. The sound I had heard was to me the signal of her parting sigh. I was distracted, and groaning with anguish I with difficulty dragged myself towards her prison; I threw myself at the bottom of those walls which separated us; I bathed them with my tears, and I believed they flowed to consecrate her tomb!—

Day at length began to appear, and by degrees dissipated the gloomy vapours with which I was surrounded. By one



of those involuntary impulses which we cannot explain, but which rarely deceives us, I cast my eyes towards that happy cottage whence all my consolation was to spring. The gardener had just come out of it caroling the glad notes of cheerfulness and health ; and finding me again in his path, eyed me with the most eager curiosity.

My hair was dishevelled, my air wild, my countenance still pale and ghastly from the sufferings of the night. He saw tears fall from my eyes ; he was affected, approached me, and, in a tone of the utmost compassion, demanded if he could be of any use to me : I groaned ; he urged me ; I sobbed aloud, and in vain attempted to answer him ; a torrent of tears eased my bursting heart ; he could not restrain his, and I was not able to resist this mark of sensibility.

“ My friend,” said I, “ humane and generous man, you see my despair, learn

too the cause of it, you are worthy this confidence: all that is dear to me is immured within those walls, and I pointed to the convent."

I then named Madame de Senanges; but I thought it best to say she was my sister.—I had recourse to this stratagem to prevent surmises, and above all not to degrade in the eyes of this respectable man the services he might render me, and which I expected from him. "A severe and jealous husband, continued I, "has torn from me this beloved sister—all her family weep her loss; she is not culpable: beware of harbouring such a thought, you would commit a crime—"

At the name of Madame de Senanges, he could scarcely restrain his impatience to interrupt me. "Madame de Senanges," cried he, as soon as I had ceased speaking; "what, that young lady so engaging, so mild!—Oh, yes, yes, I will answer for her innocence. Every body

loves her : but if you regret being parted from her, she is not less affected by your absence. Yesterday, whilst I was at work in a retired alley of the garden, I saw her through a hedge whilst she kissed an hundred times a portrait which surely was yours ; and she wept so piteously that I could have joined her with all my heart ; and I withdrew as softly as possible that she might remain ignorant that I had perceived her."

Conceive, Baron, conceive if it be possible for you, the transport into which I was thrown by the simple éloge and recital of this honest peasant.

" Well my tutelary angel !" resumed I, " you can serve me, can restore me to life, and will yourself enjoy all the happiness you will have conferred. The barbarian who holds her in bondage has prohibited her receiving any letters that might be written to her. Favor our secret correspondence. Be at once the

protector of friendship, of virtue, and misfortune. Your name shall appear on the outside covers of the letters I will send you ; on the enclosure you will find that of my sister : use the best means to have them delivered to her, and in return receive hers to forward to me."

He promised all I would have him do : I asked his name, and told him mine. Joy sparkled in his eyes, and he appeared as if under the most weighty obligations to me at the very moment that he was the most tender, the most zealous of benefactors.

"My fortune is yours," said I.—"What would you say?" interrupted he in an accent of sorrow. Propose me no recompence, or you will deprive me of all the pleasure in serving you."

"This is not all you are to do for me, my friend," said I. "Before I leave this place, you must contrive that I shall see Madame de Senanges. This evening at

sun-set, when the nuns shall all be gone to attend' vespers, could she not shew herself to me for a moment at the casement of her apartment? I will ask but a single look, and I shall be happy. Speak to Julia her woman; tell her I am here. My good friend, my dear René—(that is his name) you will by so doing console two hearts.—What enjoyment for yours!"

He promised to use his utmost endeavours to accomplish what I required; and advised me to retire for the present, lest my appearance might create suspicion, and not to return till the close of day: he then left me and entered the gate of the convent, having first pointed out to me the apartment of Madame de Senanges, on which I kept my eyes constantly fixed as I slowly withdrew.

I had not proceeded many paces on my return, when I saw poor Dumont at a distance running towards me; he soon

joined me, all trembling and out of breath with agitation; he had lost his way in searching for me through the forest; and now chid me pretty severely for the distress I had occasioned him; indeed I had more than once reproached myself for it. For his consolation I related to him my adventure with a confidence which he very well merited.

Arrived at our inn, it was in vain that he urged me to take some repose: I could do nothing but reckon the moments with all the impatience of desire till the time should arrive when I was to be informed of the success of my message; long before the hour sounded I was again on my way towards the convent. As I approached it the first object I perceived was honest René, who came to meet me to inform me of all he had done. Julia had been informed of my arrival; she had flown up to her mistress, and soon returned again leaping

with joy: the rendezvous was fixed beneath the windows of her apartment, at that hour when at this season the day begins to decline. In the fear of letting the moment escape me on which my existence depended, I took care not to remove to any distance from the spot. Did I wander a step from it, I returned with precipitation, my eye still fixed upon the window where my beautiful and unfortunate mistress was to appear. I started at the movement of the most distant object, I trembled at the slightest sound; I feared all eyes; I hoped, I languished, I expected, I was ready to expire: she shewed herself at length—my strength totally forsook me.—Never were two lovers in a situation at once so delicious and so cruel: she spoke to me with her eyes; she seemed ready to precipitate herself into my arms, mine extended as if to receive her, I was on my knees; my sighs and inarticulate sen-

tences ascended to her, and were answered by her sobs. How beautiful, how interesting did she appear ! Her grief added a thousand new graces to her charms. She disappeared for a moment, making me a sign to remain : she soon returned, and threw me a billet conceived in these terms :

“ Good God ! it is you !—I dared not believe my eyes ; but my heart assures me of it : why cannot I expire with the excess of my joy ! But fly, fly, dear object of my love !—your danger, my reputation, even yours—all exact it.—Fly, and bear with you my life : see my tears flow, and no longer resist.—I am not able to support all the sensations that overwhelm me ; my soul is ready to abandon me !—Adieu.”—

I kissed and bathed this letter with my tears : pleasure, grief, agitation, and fear, confounded all my senses, overcame my spirits, and distracted my heart.



A door of the convent opening with a loud noise obliged Madame de Senanges to vanish: the casement was closed; all disappeared from my eyes, and I remained as if annihilated.

After some minutes I recovered my recollection, and reluctantly dragging myself towards the cottage of René, I threw myself into his arms without being able to utter a word.—He comprehended this silence; and his wife was affected even to tears. The supper of these good people was ready; they proposed my partaking it with them, and I accepted the invitation. Never has the most splendid banquet appeared to me so delicious, as did this frugal and rural repast prepared by nature, and offered by philanthropy; it retraced in my mind the simplicity of the early ages of the world. Our temperate meal concluded, Theresa (that is the name of René's wife) arose, and taking a lamp conducted me to the

cradle where her infant lay ; she wished to see if he slept at his ease : " Confess," said she to me, " does he not very much resemble his father ? " and she kissed the father because of the resemblance. Baron, I leave to your heart the task of finishing this picture ; I have sketched it, that is sufficient for you. " Dear ~~child~~ " cried I, " offspring of my benefactors, ~~impelled~~ impelled by the most tender emotion, " whilst I live never shalt thou know the pressure of misfortune that affluence can avert : born in the bosom of candour and innocence, thou hast every claim to happiness. Sleep, sleep in security, henceforward I take thee under my protection, never wilt thou be abandoned by me, or by Madame de Senanges." I then stooped down to the cradle as if to caress him in my turn, and took an opportunity unperceived to slide in a rouleau of fifty louis d'ors. The carriage of the letters must be paid which René is

to receive from and to forward to me. Dumont waited for me, and I made an effort to tear myself from this respectable couple. I could scarcely get free from their affectionate embraces, and I saw depicted in the honest countenance of René a secret satisfaction at having escaped the offer of a recompence. At length we parted, but whilst removing from this interesting place, I turned my head twenty times towards that window where Madame de Senanges had appeared to me, but which I could no longer behold but in my mind's eye—for which no darkness exists.

My dear Baron, I am still at the village of \*\*\*; it is from thence I now write to you. Here I am alone, unknown, near my life's sole treasure: why cannot I live, die, be here entombed! Tomorrow I must tear myself from it—with what grief of heart is not to be expressed. Still however what thanks have

I to render thee O Heaven ! A ray of happiness has illumined the abyss into which I had fallen ; I have once more seen her whom I shall adore till the last sigh shall rend this heart ; I have found the means of communicating to her the effusions of my grief and tenderness ; I have diffused some of the comforts of life under the rustic roof, in the abode of innocence !—I am not totally wretched.

## LETTER CVII.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

I HAVE seen you !—Good God, what a moment ! how paint to you my distress, my joy, that sweet trepidation, those delicious tears which have never flowed but for you !—My very fears were pleasures. Ah ! those adored recollections

will be ever present to my heart: that heart burns with the most ardent love, it bears only your image; and it tells me that under the weight of the heaviest chains I am still free, since I can still idolize you. But where are you? I call you in vain, you can no longer hear me. Each instant that passes, each step you take removes you further from me!—But so lately before my eyes, so near your tender mistress!—At present, alas!—Heavens! here is a letter from you! Dear object of my affections, you love me!—and you dare pity me! The ingrate! he knows not then that the most cruel death would be sweet to me if suffered for him! Ah! calm those agitations; learn to subdue fate, let us rise superior to ours. No longer injure me by giving way to affliction. Can we be separated when the tenderest love unites us? and think you I regret a world of which I had already lost sight? Let the

universe, let my prosecutor, let Heaven itself, envy me: I have, in my prison, your esteem, the testimony of my own conscience, and proofs the most interesting of your tenderness; of what import to me the injustice of one man and the blame of all? I have no cause to blush in my own eyes, or in yours! I render thanks to my tyrant; yes, these grates, these bolts, the solitariness of this cloister, all these impotent barriers are precious to me; they save me from my own weakness, and perhaps have added to my love. All in this abode tends to nourish it. I am here remote from an importunate crowd; I here pass my days in reading over your letters, in kissing the beloved characters. I press your portrait to my palpitating heart, which disputes its possession with my eager looks; but this is not yet enough for me; I see you in every object which presents itself to my eyes; and I would

shut them upon all should I cease to find you there. O you ! who have appeared to me as a beneficent God ; you who have come to enchant, to embellish with your presence my existence, my solitude, all which surrounds me ; dear lover, my supreme good, my chief, my only treasure ! what do I not owe you ? All the rage of jealousy, the austere vigilance of the guardians of my liberty, nothing has had power to deter you, nothing could deprive me of the pleasure of once more beholding you. It was Heaven that conducted your steps ; it protects virtue ; it pardons sensibility when accompanied by innocence. For what would it punish us ? To love each other as we adore its perfection, is to offer it the incense most pleasing in its sight. Yes, its goodness watches over us ; it is that has sent us this respectable peasant, more great in his poverty than many beings who would look down.

on him with disdain. This man too has seen, has spoken to you—judge of the consequence he has acquired in my eyes ! how much I love him ! he says my brother is charming ; he told my Julia so : and I make her repeat to me a hundred times the slightest of his expressions on this subject.—My brother, my friend, my lover, you who are still more to me than all this, how much do I approve of the innocent stratagem to which you have had recourse ! A departure from truth is no longer a meanness when it tends to ennoble the services of our benefactor, and preserves unimpaired the dignity of his character. I admire, I appreciate your delicacy, but it does not astonish me.

Julia has concerted with him a plan to prevent their being seen together. She is to go every day to a certain place appointed to deposit my letters, and to seek for yours. How can we ever suffi-



ciently recompence them for such a kindness? Let us not complain : the mystery of our commerce diffuses a new charm over it ; more free it might become culpable. Who knows even, who knows if seeing me every day you would have loved me as much? Ah ! I bless what has happened to me if it has rendered me more dear to you.—Adieu, adieu.—Be tranquil ; let the passion I inspire be sweet and undisturbed ! Enjoy those pleasures which present themselves, they will be mine : but give some moments too to love, to its abstractions, to my idea. Be happy.—Ah ! say, can you be so without me?

## LETTER CVIII.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME  
DE SENANGES.

WHERE am I? whence comes it that you have forced me to fly, to abandon your desert? How hideous is that in which I again find myself! how insulated is my situation in the midst of that multitude so busily employed around me, and which I detest, because it calls off my attention, because it irritates still more the deep wound of my heart! Where am I dragged! what painful duties bind me, what cold forms of etiquette hold me in chains! Sterile and frozen souls, what do I not suffer in being forced to mingle in your commerce! All in you is menacing, even that glozing smile which plays on your

perfidious lips; you penetrate the griefs of the unfortunate only that you may avoid him. It is in the hut of René one to be found the effusions of a feeling heart; the tender tears of sympathy; it is there that I have enjoyed a moment of happiness: behold me now replunged into the gloom of melancholy.—Alas! what is the fate of the being I adore? she weeps, and my hand cannot dry her tears! she groans, and their echo cannot reach my ear! She is snatched from the adornings of a world which she embellished; her youth is obscured, she is condemned to the irksomeness of a solitude—to end perhaps but with her existence! Even her fair fame is aspersed; and it is for my sake, through my means that she is thus unhappy, thus traduced! And I still live! and I fly not to expiate the wrongs I have done her, by dying on the spot where she inhabits! What do I here where your sufferings are insulted,

where all are deaf to the voice of that justice which would defend you ! But they are your orders that I obey in thus suffering. When I overwhelm you with injuries, it is but just you should inflict my punishment.—Yet, ah ! the penalty is too cruel. What detestable objects heighten the gloom around me ! how odious is the aspect of vice, whilst we hear the sighs of innocence echo from afar ! Whilst so many women, guilt in their hearts, audacity in their looks, haughtily consult on the choice of their pleasures, you languish in the horrors of captivity ! But what do I say ? your chains are glorious, their enjoyments imprisoned. Virtue remains to console you ; remorse is their portion : they despise themselves—they are the pitiable objects. Yet still we are separated.—What ! are there no means to break your bonds, to combat injustice, to restore you to your lover ?—Hear me : I can

brave all, undertake all ; the multitude of obstacles, of perils, are but sharper spurs to my love. I will snatch you from your persecutor ; we will fly together to some happier clime where virtue will be respected ; where shame will not be the portion of the most delicious of sentiments ; we will reclaim all the rights of nature. It is the choice of the heart which forms our real country. In quitting yours you will throw off the yoke of those narrow prejudices, those miserable decorums which it has adopted ; and which are become sacred only from the force of habit, or the terrors of education.—You will be all my own. Lovers such as we find every where a home ; they exist in each other ; what can they have lost ? This project has transported, intoxicated me ; say but one word, and it is accomplished.

But of what do I think ? You will never consent that these chimeras of my

imagination should be realized. At least beware how you condemn them. I love to feed my melancholy with those illusions which console and deceive it; I love to paint to myself those blissful regions, where, under a serene sky, and in the midst of susceptible beings, we should be at liberty to adore each other. Let me inhabit a world created by my enthusiasm; let me accompany you there in idea; and, since fate has in reality separated us, allow an innocent delusion to unite us, though but for a moment. Alas! alas! my tears flow; and I am restored to sad reality.

The more you affect an air of tranquillity in your last letter, in that letter where you command your own affliction to spare mine, the more you add to my tortures. Be happy, say you; I happy! and it is you who counsel me to be so! you wish me to partake of those pleasures which present them-

selves ! Cruel friend !—To weep your fate by day, to spend the night in anguish, to envelope myself in my despair, to court all which can augment it, to wander incessantly into those solitary promenades where I have so often accompanied you; there to call upon your name, to seek the vestiges of your steps, to press to my lips, to my heart, each precious pledge of your tenderness; these are my pleasures; these I possess, I would have none others. I hate all those females by whom I am surrounded ; it seems to me as if they were accomplices in your miseries; I draw comparisons between you and them ; judge whether my fidelity is in danger ! In the letter which I wrote you before my leaving the village of \*\*\*, and which René undertook to have delivered to you, I spoke to you of the odious Madame d'Ercy; you mention nothing of this in yours. Ah! she is

more vile than your superior mind can conceive. Oh, Heavens! and I could love her! I, destined to adore you! I, destined one day to feel all the enthusiasm of virtue!

How are you at this moment employed? Are your eyes turned towards that spot where I was prostrated before you? do they wander towards that dark forest, amidst whose gloomy shades I passed the longest of nights? Do you feel, as I do, all the horrors of our separation?

### LETTER CIX.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

I WISHED to console you, I have no longer the power to attempt it. Your presence, that moment of happiness



which smiled upon me, had made me rise superior to my woes ; my courage has disappeared with you, and the most profound depression has succeeded.—Alas ! we are separated ! These tremendous gates are perhaps shut upon me for ever ! I can perceive no termination to my sufferings. Have I then merited their severity ? I am deprived of all ; I am far from you ; my reputation is made the prey of malevolence ; my uncle is inconsolable : for me flow the tears of my beloved friend, Madame de \* \* \* ; and, to complete my misfortunes, I cause the affliction of him I love beyond life !—Ah ! when I told you I was tranquil, when I applauded myself for my resolution in deceiving you, it was whilst I shed a torrent of tears that I exhorted you to restrain yours.—Could I indeed become reconciled to those places that you inhabit not, to every day behold the light, but

not my lover ! to seek for you even in darkness, but still in vain ! to be innocent yet suspected, unfortunate and without hope ! to be chained here, when my heart flies towards you, when I have prohibited, when I ought to prohibit your appearing here again ! would it indeed be possible for me not to detest those torments which make you suffer so much, which your affliction make doubly horrible to me, yet which I could not sustain should you cease to participate in them !—Human efforts could not extend so far.—I have paused here once more to read over your last letter, and I am become more calm. How tender are those precious letters ! How much do you merit my most ardent love ! And yet I have allowed myself to be overcome by vexation ! Have I not been wrong, since possessed of your affection ? Forget a moment of weakness ; and, above all, follow not

my example in giving way to despondence. Tell me something of Madame de \*\*\*. It is painful to me not to write to her: but were I to multiply messages, I fear the mystery of our correspondence might be discovered; and I resist the impulse of friendship, deprive myself of its consolations, to preserve the happiness of conversing with you. Tell her the reasons of my silence, and my regrets on the subject: her heart will do justice to mine; I know her well; she will pardon the mistress, without doubting the friend. I have not spoken to you of Madame d'Ercy, and you seem astonished at it! You honor with your hatred an object of contempt! It is not your anger, it is your pity she ought to excite. The dreadful blow she has levelled at our peace must make her vile in her own eyes. Yet a few years, and she will become the opprobrium of those whose idols she now is.

Her admirers will disappear with her charms; her vices will remain; she will be alone in the universe.—We shall be but too well avenged. On your part, never forego the recollection of that passion into which she surprised you, nor of those services she rendered you. In a soul of honor, nothing can cancel the ties of gratitude; and though she should arm herself against me, in defending me, you ought still to respect her.

Oh, my friend! how gloomy are these deserts! how many unfortunate victims here groan in silence! how many forced vows are followed by feelings of despair that must be suppressed! Sighs here are interdicted; the face of day is shunned; the nights are devoted to sobs and grief; or rather the nights here are eternal! And yet, this formidable asylum has become dear to me for a moment. My eyes are ever attached to

that space you occupied, my tears have marked the spot ; I never contemplate it without a palpitation of heart, a trembling agitation, which would betray me, did I not fly all eyes. Julia is my sole companion ; I would have no other ; she speaks to me of you. I write every day to my uncle ; I am permitted to write only to him. This occupation is sweet to me : I divide all my time between my lover and this respectable man. What anxieties do I feel on his account ! The attentions of his niece are wanting to him ; I have been torn from his arms as a criminal ; his delicacy and his heart have both been wounded ; and his precious health so far from being established—On which ever side I turn, subjects of grief present themselves. What a distance divides us ! How much am I to be pitied, and how little firmness do I possess ! Be more courageous than me. It is not my situation which oc-

casions my despair, it is your absence. Take care of your life, if you wish to prolong the term of mine.

## LETTER CX.

FROM THE COMMANDEUR, TO MADAME  
DE SENANGES.

M. DE SENANGES, with whom I now am, my dear sister, has written to the Abbess of your convent, and I take the opportunity of putting a letter to you under the same cover with his, that I may be assured of its being delivered to you. I am grieved for your misfortunes, and, believe me, do not neglect your interests. I love my brother; but my tenderness for him has not stifled that I feel for you. I pity you; but it is not a pity without exertion: since your departure, I have never quitted your hus-

band, in the hope of bending him, of opening his eyes, and restoring you to liberty. The unhappy man ! in the midst of his rage, he is consumed by his love. M. de Valois has written to him, he has also received a letter from the Baron de \* \* \*, who have both pledged themselves for your innocence ; he is himself convinced of it. At times he detests himself, execrates his own violence, tears roll from his eyes, and he is ready to pardon all ; but suddenly a contrary sentiment seizes hold of him, and he gives himself up to transports which make me tremble for his life.

“ She hates me,” says he, “ and shall I be sensible to her miseries ? let her groan, let her expire in her tears, let her die loading me with maledictions ! What is her virtue to me ? it is her love I would possess.—But what do I say ? her virtue ! she loves another

than me; and I have not pierced the hearts of both with this hand!"

In speaking thus, his cheeks burn with indignation, his veins swell with passion, and his whole frame is convulsed: I endeavour to sooth, to console, to assist him; he repulses me with fierceness, and flies to his own apartment; where he will sometimes shut himself up for six hours together, without any one daring to approach his door.

The chase is the only amusement he allows to interrupt his alternate paroxysms of gloom and agitation: and it would seem as if he preferred that only in the design of risking his life by it. He affects mounting the most fiery and vicious horses, and abandons them to their headlong velocity, in roads almost impassable for any others. He likes to escape from his attendants, and to wan-



der alone in the depths of the thickest woods.

I confess to you, the state of my brother's mind costs me many tears. His passion has transformed him to a tiger; but even whilst he persecutes you, he is more miserable than you can be: however, it is in his passion itself, all ferocious, all unbridled as it is, that I shall find the means of disarming it. Characters such as his, when fatigued by violent agitations, become equally susceptible of tender emotions. The same sensibility which places the poniard in their hands, in its turn excites them to compassion: it is to this I would lead him; and I should have the certainty of doing so, if you will second my efforts, my prayers, and not be merciless in your turn.

He has proposed to you your returning to live with him; will you consent to it? I shall obtain all. Before two

days, you are free ; you resume your rights in the eyes of a world where you were formed to shine, and in which you will appear with new lustre, when your husband will himself have made you the most authentic reparation.

My dear sister, reflect for a moment, and look forward to all the evils to which you expose yourself, by persisting in your animosity against a man on whom your very existence depends. He can deprive you of every degree of consideration, so precious to souls such as yours. You are in the bloom of life : will you determine on spending all of it that is yet to come, in tears, in regrets, and, I dare also add, in dishonor. A wife the most innocent is no longer so in the eyes of the public, when her husband has taken decided steps against her. That public, often so unjust, becomes equitable then, because, not being able to sound the depth of hearts, it can only judge from appearances.

I am well acquainted with all my brother has made you suffer. I know the rage to which he has given way, the violence of his transports, the blindness of his jealousy. But he has himself suffered so much, that his torments will serve for lessons to subdue his heart—that heart which loves you to idolatry.

Draw at least this advantage from your solitude, to examine circumstances with more cool reflection, and see them in a truer light. No body in the world knows better than I do how undeviating, how irreproachable your conduct has been; but take care; your present inflexibility is nothing more than the effervescence of a new sentiment which fills your whole heart. Love, in such a soul as yours, is ever accompanied with a degree of heroism which ennobles all it suggests, which sustains the spirits for the moment, but which may diffuse the bitterness of regret over all that re-

mains of life. You have sacrificed to duty a passion the most tender, and the pride of this victory with you holds place of all—even of happiness. Blind as you are ! who knows if you will not one day weep the loss of that object which at present forms your only consolation ? He whom you love is young, ardent, thrown into a vortex where inconstancy is almost unavoidable. Who knows if, after the first regrets for your absence, he may not allow himself to be drawn away by the seductions of a world, which corrupts all who come within reach of its influence ? Who knows if an advantageous establishment may not prevail against the gloomy chimeras of a hopeless passion ?

I wish not to alarm you without cause, but there are already reports in circulation which might give weight to my advice, were I to yield credit to them. Again let me urge you ; cease to make

a god of a being, who, after all, is but a man, that is to say, ever on the brink of infidelity. I speak to you with a frankness rather harsh, but I think it necessary, to lead your mind to those objects which ought the most to attach it, and to turn it from those which deceive whilst they intoxicate you. Be again yourself: give to your virtue motives equally noble, and more solid. My brother has vices of character, I confess it: endeavour to conquer them by force of blameless conduct, by mildness and moderation. It is a praiseworthy artifice which can supply the place of a real attachment, and it is permitted us to deceive the patient we would cure. It is impossible for you to love him, who was so long, who still continues to be the torment of your existence; but you can pity, can forbear to hate him, can lead him back by degrees to virtue and to peace, and become

his benefactress, in proving yourself his friend.

Oh! how much should I enjoy his felicity!—how warmly feel yours! How sweet would be the tears I should shed could I see you re-united, could I restore you to that society to which you are both at present lost!

If you persist in your determination, my brother is condemned to an old age of horrors, with which you will partly have to reproach yourself as the cause; and you, in the spring season of your career, lose your rank in society, the esteem of the respectable part of the world, the homage due to your charms, and all the fruit of your virtues. It is for yourself, for you alone that I now plead; to break your chains, it is to you I address myself. Say but one word, they fall off: you are restored to all your rights, you save my unfortunate brother, and you give me new life by ensuring the happi-

ness of yours. Answer this letter. Senanges has desired the Abbess to give you permission to write to me; I shall expect your reply with the most anxious impatience: it will decide your fate; judge then how much it interests me!

## LETTER CXI.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
COMMANDEUR.

DEAR Commandeur, how precious to me is your letter! how soothing your conduct! It proves to me that there still exist souls of virtue; it shews me that those whom authority oppresses, and fate persecutes, are not always totally forgotten. It is the brother of M. de Senanges who interest himself in my misfortunes, who seeks the means to terminate them! All his family are not

then armed against me ! But, ah ! beware ; his hatred will be the certain consequence, should he be convinced that you do not detest me. He would wish to snatch from me the few friends that yet remain to me ; he would put the last hand to my wretchedness, by shutting against me all those hearts which pity or endeavour to console me.

Heavens ! what a proposal do you make me ! You are not yet thoroughly acquainted with M. de Senanges, since you advise me to return to him. During seven years was I the object upon whom his ferocious and inexplicable soul vented all its envenomed rage. Those means of gentle forbearance which you suggest to me, I have employed them all. How many times have I fallen at his feet ! how often, bathed them with my tears, to implore, not his justice (he knew it not), but his pity, his commiseration for a being



whom, without her having merited it, he thus overwhelmed with his cruelty. It seemed as if his fury increased in proportion to my efforts and my prayers.

You will dispense with my recounting to you all the extremities to which his barbarity carried him. In refusing to be reconciled to him, perhaps I spare him the commission of any new crimes ; at least, the repetition of cruelties unheard of, and which surpass all expression.

His character you think may change.  
—No, Commandeur, no, never ; it is become even more soured by age. He is convinced, you say, of my innocence.  
—He appears to be so ; it is a snare held out to your credulity ; he has no longer any hold over mine. Scarcely would I have consented to what he desires, before I should behold all the violence of his rage kindled anew ; it would have acquired fresh strength from the con-

straint of that moment of dissimulation. Then, indeed, would my days have become days of anguish, my nights have been consumed in sobs and tears, every moment of my existence marked with the horrors of his despotism.

If, at the time when my soul, devoted only to its grief, was ignorant even of the name of love, if at that time, I say, he suspected my slightest motion, my gestures, my looks, my words the most innocent, what would he do now, when my heart is agitated by the most ardent passion that was ever felt? He would hear my most secret sighs; he would read in my eyes the involuntary expression of my love; he would interpret my silence often more impassioned than language itself! and would dive, with a rage, from which I would have every thing to dread, even into the mystery of my thoughts. Yes, my good Commandeur, he would penetrate my inmost

soul every moment of the day, nor should I perhaps myself have power to conceal it from him.

*It is permitted us to deceive the patient we would cure,* say you. And shall I have recourse to deceit? rather, much rather, would I give him this heart to tear piece-meal, than debase that heart, which has never been known to him by the slightest shadow of deception. It would be insupportable to me; the purity of the intention would not render it less odious in my eyes: and I must be sincere, though a death the most horrible was to be the price of that sincerity.

Behold me, such as I am. Pity my sufferings; respect my principles. After having weighed reasons thus forcible, can you still urge me to a reconciliation which would be but a pretext for new atrocities. I know it well, and I feel it with the most profound grief of heart,

that M. de Senanges has robbed me of that consideration which I enjoyed, and which I will also dare to add, was the just recompence of my conduct ; he has deprived me, not of honor, but of fame, that fame which depends upon public opinion : he has taken from me every good at which his power could grasp ; and he has shut me up in one tomb, thence to pass to another. I have no longer any affinity with human beings, they despise me ; they are ignorant of the extent of my misfortunes, and the greatness of my sacrifices ; but the testimony of my conscience remains to me : that tranquillizes me, that hardens me against that false opprobrium which is the vice of our society, and not a chastisement which can dismay innocence. We can only be really punished by the turpitude of our own hearts ; mine is pure.

One mortal exists who participates

in my affections, in my sufferings, in my courage; one man of honor, who can do justice to my virtue (who is perhaps the victim to it): he is my judge, he is my universe. Yes, Commandeur, I love, and my love is too noble to call forth a blush for the avowal of it. Was I the only one of my sex whom nature had condemned to love nothing? In my childish years given up to the tyranny of the most merciless of husbands, with him I have only known the trembling sensations of fear, the shudderings of antipathy, and the rigor of duties, which no sentiment rendered pleasing, no charm softened. After this dreadful trial, I enjoyed a moment of liberty, to which I had looked forward as the supreme good. I exhausted all the pleasures of dissipation; I in some sort skimmed the surface of happiness: but the calm in which my soul slumbered, soon became a painful languor. I per-

ceived, or rather I deeply felt the emptiness of those frivolous amusements by which I had been seduced; sighs which had no object sometimes escaped me, and I involuntarily wished to meet a being to whom they might be directed.

One presented himself; like me, wearied of pomp and noise; panting after the delicious emotions of a sentiment, in which all others would be absorbed. I know not what sympathy, what secret voice of the heart informed us of the mutual accord of our souls, and attracted us towards each other. In him I have found all that is honorable, delicate, and generous in love; he was not startled at those duties I had to fulfil, and to which, above every thing, I had determined strictly to adhere. He submitted to the most cruel conditions that could be imposed upon a lover, and I judged of his tenderness, from the respect he shewed for my reputation.

His attachment has done no violence to my principles ; it is my life ; what do I say ! it is much more ; it renders my misfortunes supportable. I pronounce the name of the object of my affections, and my sorrows are hushed to peace.

It is to you, it is to the brother of M. de Senanges that I make such a confession ; judge whether I esteem you, judge whether my confidence is entire, and whether I fear it will ever be betrayed.

Ah ! Commandeur, dear Commandeur, seek not to destroy a passion without which I should be no longer any thing. All the rest of the world may accuse, may overwhelm me. — My honor is a deposite in the heart of my lover. It is there that I have lost nothing ; it is there that I enjoy all my rights ; it is there that an interest the most lively, an esteem the most merited, recompences me for the wrongs the contempt of the universe : and you would have me re-

nounce the only comfort which is left me ! No, no, hope it not. Beware of giving credit to the reports which are circulated, they must be false.—He knows what I have done for him ; he sees the evils to which I have exposed myself, rather than forego my love ; he knows that in this solitude I have no other resources to prolong my wretched existence but the assurance of his fidelity. And shall he prove an ingrate !—He cannot be so without becoming the most inhuman of men, without having some features of resemblance with my persecutor.

Why do you wish to alarm me ? Do you believe you will cure by affrighting me ? It is impossible that a heart such as mine can ever be detached from the object of its affections ; I have given that heart to him, I have given it without reserve, and death must freeze its vital current before it can change, or lose any



part of its sensibility. In rendering the Chevalier suspected, believe not you can bring me back to a husband whom I ought not to hate, but whom I cannot love, and whom I will never deceive.

M. de Valois, that uncle so tender, that friend so sincere, that benefactor so generous, has made me the same remonstrances that you have done; but I saw, by the ill-formed and partly effaced characters of his letter, that his hand had trembled in tracing them; and that they had been moistened by his tears. I saw that he himself shuddered at the counsels which he gave me, and that he urged me to a reconciliation with M. de Senanges, as one would encourage a condemned malefactor to support the punishment prepared for him.

M. de Senanges!—his name alone strikes me with terror. Rather, rather a thousand times would I expire in this retreat, than again return to pass my

miserable days with him ! Here at least a tremendous and vengeful eye is not fixed on all my actions ; here tyranny does not go so far as to scrutinize even the emotions of my heart. I may think at liberty on the object of my love, I may dwell unmolested on his idea, weep over his image ; I may yield to the delicious effusions and consolations of friendship.

A young lady, whom an ill-fated love has dragged to this asylum, where she will soon bind herself by her irrevocable vows, has divined my sufferings, and confided to me the causes of hers. We groan, we sigh, we weep together, and find in this unreserved disclosure of our mutual misfortunes the most soothing comfort. Alas ! I hourly invoke Heaven to preserve to me this precious friend. Her declining health makes me incessantly tremble for her life, and I should be in despair were she to be torn from me.

Leave me here, since you have no other means but those you have proposed to free me from hence. Only may my example and my fate be useful to those whose parents in future would force their inclinations! May I be the last victim to ill-assorted ties; and may my tears not be lost to a sex too timidly weak; too severely oppressed, and almost ever unfortunate! How many females in my place would have abandoned themselves to the most unrestrained licentiousness, and perhaps have merited their fate by the scandal of their conduct! Virtue has supported me, but am I the less overwhelmed by ignominy? Irreproachable in my own eyes, am I the less criminal in those of others? or are my chains the less galling? O my father! if those who no longer exist here, take any part in the woes of those who still inhabit this miserable globe, what must thy sufferings be! how must my groans

disturb the repose of the tomb in which thou hast been interred ! See thy unhappy daughter imprisoned, degraded in the eyes of society, a victim to the rage of a barbarian.—See her torn by conflicts, ah ! how painful between honor the most inflexible and the most ardent of passions. But what do I say ? whither wander ? No, I reproach thee not ; thou foresawest not the consequences of my compliance, of that fatal union, the advantages of which had dazzled thee. In the depth of my misery, I have at least the satisfaction to reflect, that I never failed in the respect I owed thee, and to have proved by my obedience how much thou wast beloved.

Dear Commandeur, my letter is all blotted by my tears, I know not if you can read it. How deeply is my heart oppressed ! Alas ! I thank you for thy generous interest you take in my fate ; but I cannot offer you my gratitude for

the proof of it. I will wait in the expectation that M. de Senanges will at length take pity on an unhappy creature whom he so vindictively pursues ; I shall expect his permission to return to the protection of my beloved and respected M. de Valois. If he still withholds that permission, I will remain where I am ; here weep, if such is his decision till my final hour arrives, which is perhaps no distant period. You, however, will I trust watch over the life of your brother ; I am far from wishing its termination : I pray for his happiness, his tranquillity, should it even be purchased at the expence of mine. All I ask of you is to solicit my being restored to my uncle ; if you obtain this, I shall owe you more than life, and I will employ the remainder of mine in efforts to render me worthy of such a benefit.

## LETTER CXII.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

DEAR friend of my heart, what happiness do I feel ! I have made you a new sacrifice ; I have given you an added proof of my love ! I yesterday received a letter from the Commandeur de Senanges ; he has offered me my liberty on the condition of returning to live with his brother : he is sure he says of bending him to his purpose. I shuddered at the proposal, and have rejected it. I would infinitely rather groan some time longer here, than be condemned to the certainty of never seeing you more. Were I to be reconciled to M. de Senanges, we should be for ever separated ; and my captivity would in consequence

be a hundred times more intolerable than that in which I now languish. You love me, I adore you, what is there further wanting to my happiness ! My cause is warmly espoused, many persons are employing in my favor all the credit they possess ; perhaps they will succeed ; perhaps I may once more see you. In any event I have the joy of having devoted myself for you ; this is a joy which you too must feel, since you know what it is to love. Every day, every instant augments my attachment : your idea follows, it enchants me ; it accompanies me to the feet of the sanctuary ; and makes my worship there almost idolatry. You merit adoration : why cannot I consecrate altars to you ! Why cannot I see a world prostrate at your feet, and give them myself the example !

How deeply impressed does a tender sentiment become in solitude ! Nothing

there calls off the mind ; all speaks to the heart, all leads to those meditations which carries the soul back to past pleasures ; which even converts into an enjoyment the reflection on our present sufferings. Yes, beloved friend of my soul, yes, when I think of you, your image alone diffuses around me an inexpressible charm ; I am happy in the excess of my love, and in the certainty of yours : I am happy in spite of M. de Senanges, of my prison, of this formidable cloister, and of the neglect or injustice of the entire universe. You love me, you tell me so, you give me the tenderest proofs of it. Ah ! if I shed tears, they are not tears of bitterness.

How much do I prize the good René ! With what interest do I follow him in all his labours ! His wife never leaves him ; she is equally active, equally laborious with himself ; the desire of lightening the burthens of her husband



gives her strength; they love each other, they feel no hardships in their daily toils, and I envy them their happiness.

Why am not I doomed to cultivate myself a little enclosure which I should inhabit with you! With what ease should I then accustom my hands to rustic occupations! Sports of a pompous tyranny, how many women as well as myself, would prefer to those palaces where they groan in bondage, a simple field where they could enjoy the charms of nature, taste the sweets of love, and renounce those depraved pleasures which offer them not even the false image of happiness!

It is now many days since you have written to me; this circumstance often grieves and alarms me in spite of myself. That cruel Commandeur too! has he not said that it is possible for you to change? What, you change! and could

I suspect you of such a crime ! all tends to tranquillize me, and to justify you. It is I who am culpable, it is impossible you should become so.—Adieu: I intend one of these days to write to Madame de \*\*\*; I owe her that proof of friendship; and will no longer deprive myself of that solace. I will give her René's address, who will receive her letter for me. In his absence, his wife, who is in the secret, is as punctual as himself. A propos she thanks you for your liberality. René was quite enraged at it, and Julia had some difficulty in pacifying him.

## LETTER CXIII.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

WHAT a night! what a tremendous night! The day has at length succeeded to it, but my terror still remains. O my friend, how dreadful does this solitude begin to appear to me! I feel as if I were alone in the universe: it seems as if all the storm of Heaven were collected beneath this gloomy sky. The night past amidst the howlings of the winds and the tumults of the tempest; I imagined I heard plaintive sighs, and inarticulate murmurs; I arose with precipitation, and I know not what illusion of fancy made me believe I recognized your voice in the lamentable sounds which thrilled to my inmost heart. I

looked around, I listened, and was convinced of my error. But whence is it that I am tormented with these gloomy visions? whence was it that on my awaking I shed torrents of tears which I found it impossible to check? and why does the mourning of universal nature seem to announce to me something disastrous; something which my imagination feels, without daring to give form to the presage?

I remained at my window till day arose, with my eyes fixed upon that spot which for a moment you had occupied, or wandering towards the neighbouring forest, whose dreary aspect gave additional sadness to the melancholy with which I was overwhelmed.

I saw René in the path which leads from his cottage, and waited his approach; I questioned him with my eyes, and he answered me by a sign that he had nothing to deliver me. Alas! you

no longer write to me ! Do you fear discovery ? or have you in reality abandoned me ? Do you love me less since I am become thus miserable, since I have sacrificed all for you ?—Pardon, pardon ; I suffer, and I impart my sufferings to you : to whom should I complain, if not to you ? I hope to hear some news of you to-day. How long are the hours here ! you only can abridge them. I depend upon you alone ; one word, and all my gloom is vanished. I feel so much, it would be cruelty in you to neglect any opportunity to console me. The letter which I have received from the Commandeur has tortured me.

*There are reports in circulation, he says, which might give weight to his counsels.*

Ah God ! of what nature then are these reports ? I forge to myself a thousand chimeras ; I give way to my terrors, and alarm myself without the power of accusing you. Alas ! have pity on my

situation : it is miserable enough without your neglect to add to its horrors. My friend, in the entire world I have nothing left but you. Say, what would you should become of me, should you deprive me of your heart ! You must know that life would be no longer any thing to me without your love.—Adieu—adieu ; I dare not tell you to what an excess I am agitated ; I fear to overwhelm you with the weight of my sufferings. Can it be that you are less sensible to them ?—Have I lost all ?

### BILLET.

FROM THE BARON, TO THE CHEVALIER.

WHENCE are those reports, Chevalier, which are circulated through Paris ? It is said you are to espouse the Baroness de \*\*\*. I esteem you too much to be-

lieve it; but take care the rumour does not reach the ears of Madame de Senanges, it would carry death to her heart.

It is an age since I have heard any thing of you, what can be the occasion of your silence? I have received an answer from Senanges. Unhappy man! it is impossible to disarm his rage. I write twenty letters every day; I urge, I solicit: the Marechal's lady too is straining every nerve; I have not a moment of repose; but I should be very sorry to be tranquil whilst my friends suffer.

## LETTER CXIV.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

You alone remain to me in the universe, and you abandon me to the most cruel suspense! Three letters without replies!

Alas ! I knew not what it was to doubt ! how dreadful are its tortures !—and can I doubt ! ; doubt your love ! ah ! pardon me, I am unjust. Pardon me, beloved friend ; I know your heart ; and suspicion cannot approach mine.—Yet, why do my tears flow ?—What means your silence ? and whence these sad presages which shake my soul ? O Heavens ! why should I give way to them for an instant ? I will banish every fear, every doubt ! Your business, your necessary attendance at court, the duties of your office, in short, how can I tell what has prevented you ?—It has certainly been impossible for you to write since you have not done so.—Here is a letter from M. de Valois just delivered me.—Great God ! he tells me—have I read aright ?—what heart-piercing intelligence ! A report prevails that you are to espouse the Baroness de \*\*\* ; my uncle seems to believe it ; my uncle cannot know—



he has been imposed upon; but a mistress is not thus to be deceived.—Fear not that I will accuse you; I am too unhappy so easily to let go my dependance upon you. Nothing can destroy my confidence in you.—And yet—Ah! if—Your inconstancy would be death to me; to yourself everlasting remorse.—No, no, I cannot dwell on the insupportable idea. Write, write to me: tell me what I wish, what I know to be true; tell me that you will love me ever, that this alone is reality, that the report—Oh, my friend, what a vile imposture! Again I repeat, I give no credit to it—I love—I am beloved.

## LETTER CXV.

FROM THE MARCHIONESS D'ERCY, TO  
THE ABBESS OF THE CONVENT DE \*\*\*.

M. DE SENANGES entreats of you, my dear cousin, to watch more closely than ever over every action, every movement, every step of his wife.—Well, tell me, how does she bear her solitude? Is she very much altered? It would be strange if she were not. For my part, I know were I to be shut up, I should very soon become hideously ugly. Does not she begin to be rather so? Write to me how it is with her: the slightest particulars will be interesting to me—coming from you. I have no news to write you, except what every body knows, that the Chevalier de Versenai is on the point of marriage with the beautiful Baroness.

de \*\*\*, the young widow of a man of quality, very much admired in town, and very powerful at court.—Adieu, my dear cousin. I will come and see you soon ; I have great need of your pious counsels.

## LETTER CXVI.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

AH ! why recal me to life ?—Julia, my good Julia, if my fate interests you, leave me to die. Yes, I detest your fatal tenderness. Your cares, your pity itself, all is torture to me.—

It is then true, it is possible !—You have deceived me ; sincerity no longer inhabits the earth ; and no other hope remains for me but to shelter me in that earth's cold bosom. You will have it so, you have sealed my doom, you have

left me no other asylum. I had shut my ears to the truth, but a nun, who has ever shewn me more marked affection than any of the others, has given me for my perusal a billet she has had from her brother; I here enclose it for yours.

### BILLET.

FROM THE COMTE DE \*\*\*, TO HIS SISTER,  
A NUN IN THE CONVENT DE \*\*\*.

"I WRITE, my dear sister, to inform you of the marriage of our relation, the Baroness de \*\*\*, with the Chevalier de Versenai, which is already, it is said, in great forwardness, and soon to take place. He had a violent passion for a very handsome woman, who was, however, snatched from his seductions, and is, I believe, shut up in your convent; but the charms, and the powerful con-

nections of the Baroness, have effaced all other attachments. The king himself has desired this marriage; and the Chevalier seems enchanted with an establishment, which promises him a still higher degree of royal favor than he already possesses. As I know the interest you take in all that passes amongst us, I have hastened to impart to you an event with which all our family are highly pleased.

Adieu."

And the cruel girl thinks she has rendered me a service!—Oh Heavens!—The public reports which reached M. de Valois, now fifty leagues distant from Paris; those which the Abbess circulated through the convent, my terrifying presentiments, all that your silence announced to me, all is confirmed! I now regret even the torments of my suspense! All is then over: my eyes are opened to the profundity of the abyss

into which you have dragged me.—I perceived it not before : chains, opprobrium, imprisonment, so many sufferings endured for you. I would have cherished them till my latest breath : the more of horror was attached to my fate, the more I believed myself assured of your constancy. I despised the opinions of men, I would almost have braved celestial vengeance : my recompence, my fame, my all centered in your heart. What was the esteem of others to me ? I possessed yours. But now, what remains for me ? Say, have I in the universe, have I a single support ! Shall I prostrate myself before that God whom I have offended, alas ! whom I must still offend, since I can never cease to love you ? Shall I carry back to M. de Senanges my regrets for having so falsely appreciated your worth, a culpable attachment, the despair of a heart whose last pulse shall still throb for you ? Could I support the

presence of a man who has suspected me, of a public who have despised me? Am I still worthy to possess the affection of my friends? I abandoned them all for you. Never, never will I see them more. It is far remote from all that was ever dear to me that I will end my days, those days which you have filled with anguish! You will pity me, cruel man, you will pity me, if you have a heart. How do my woes multiply! Your guilt brings back all those I have ever suffered; it places before my eyes, with still deeper gloom than the reality presented, the funeral solemnity to which they have lately been witness.

Alas! in this dismal abode, I had found a friend that sympathy, so natural between two unhappy beings, attracted us towards each other; the similarity of our situations, that of our sentiments, all tended to unite us. I tasted a sweet, luxury in weeping with her over her

sorrows and my own. But I have lost her for ever ! she is snatched from me. Poor sufferer ! she had hoped to find repose at the feet of these altars ; but deceived even in that hope, she there met only the image of the perfidious wretch who had abandoned her. Retirement, example, austerities, nothing could calm her griefs ; friendship itself could not soften them ; her heart was mortally wounded. Victim to a passion repaid by the blackest ingratitude, I beheld her worn away by misery, wasted by continual tears : I too wept, but then only for her.—Then I felicitated myself in your love, felt a pride and consolation in my own. She expired in my arms which strained her in their grasp as if to retain her still in life. I saw flow, I received her last tear ; it was consecrated to love—to the barbarian, whom beauty, candour, virtue could not fix. She died, pronouncing his name, invoking Heaven



to watch over his happiness. Never shall I forget the tender, the steadfast look she cast on me when expiring; that sad look is graven on my heart, never can it be effaced from it; it seemed to warn me that, like her betrayed, I should soon follow and rejoin her.—It is the prayer I breathe over her tomb.—Amiable, unfortunate friend, you so worthy of another fate, you whom I have lost, doubtless because you loved, because you consoled me, and I am born to suffer—never shall I cease to regret you.

But why do I weep her fate! she died undeceived, nothing remains for me but to follow her.—There is then a port where I shall be secure against you—a harbour of rest! where all misfortunes end, and I am hastening thither.—I no longer know myself; nothing can equal the disorder, the wanderings of my ima-

gination. My honor itself which has triumphed over my love, over you!—yes, I detest it, I would I had made you the sacrifice of it, to render you still the more culpable.—Pardon, great God! this criminal, this involuntary transport, and thus promptly disavowed: but am I the less punished for having sacrificed all to duty?—What! and dare I then believe myself innocent?—Alas! I am in the power of one barbarian, I love another to distraction!—It is the most inhuman of the two that is adored. I merit my fate.—

Attend to my words. In this moment of anguish I have no longer any thing to hide. I have lost your heart; think you I wish to retain your esteem? When I caused your tears to flow, when I resisted your transports; know that, I participated in those transports.—But whither do I wander?—Forget what I

have just said ; forget so much meanness, so much weakness.—Forget even my name.—

Oh Heavens ! whilst I die in despair, you are intoxicated with love for another ! you are taken up with projects of ambition ; and my present sufferings perhaps are an added enjoyment for you both ! But what human heart can be so hardened as to take pleasure in such a homage ? She is, doubtless, ignorant of what her happiness costs me. May she never know it by experience ! Your letters and portrait I shall return you ; I am no longer any thing to you, I would retain nothing of you. Ah ! if in resigning them I could succeed in forgetting you ! You would wish it, ingrate ! you are capable of envying me, even the pleasure of dying for you !

Receive, at least without repugnance, this letter steeped in my tears, the last I shall ever trouble you with. Revel in

all those enjoyments of which you have deprived me. These characters which my hand with difficulty traces, are the last of mine you will ever behold. You will have it so—you are about to become another's! Attempt not to answer me. May you live as happy as I die wretched.

## LETTER CXVII.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO MADAME DE \* \* \*.

OH! my friend, my tender friend, pray for my death; I have no longer any hope remaining but in that asylum. Would you believe it? Could you even have formed the idea? He abandons me; he weds another! He has led me into an abyss, he leaves me there! he

insults my tears! What have I then been guilty of—except of adoring him? Happy or miserable as he chose to make me, I looked only to him in the universe; poverty, wretchedness, degradation, had I been reduced to all these for him, I should have preferred that state to the empire of the world, which I should have wished for only to lay at his feet, only to live under his laws. He was my happiness, I prayed but for his; and this is the woman whom he betrays, despises, forgets! Have compassion on an unfortunate being in tears, who has no longer any ties to existence, who sees herself forsaken on all sides, and who still breathing the vital air, feels before hand all the horrors of dissolution. It is my last sigh I now waft to you. Pity me not, I conjure you for dying; pity me only for loving, for idolizing the ingrate who pierces my heart: he is the sole man, the only one—who was ever

loved to such excess. In ceasing to exist I shall feel only the pang of being torn from him. Judge to what a degree I have lost myself, have strayed from a sense of duty ! I have heard that M. de Senanges has had a fall in hunting, from which I am assured much danger is apprehended : and yet it is not he who employs my thoughts ! How culpable do I feel myself ! Cruel as he has been, he is still my husband ; I ought to pity, I ought to tremble for him ; I ought to forget all his errors, since his life is in danger. Ah ! I shudder at myself, my weakness terrifies me, and my remorse serves for no other purpose but to increase it. Barbarous lover ! enjoy now to luxury all the woes thou hast made me suffer ! I cannot go on. This idea forces shrieks of anguish from my heart. What must you think of me ? Tell me that you love me still, that you do not despise me ! I have need of this assu-

rance, and I shall obtain it. I have not a doubt of your heart, it is thoroughly acquainted with mine. You well know how little I have merited the opprobrium with which I have been loaded, the sorrows which have marked my days, and the stroke which terminates them. The hope of royal favor—a vile motive of ambition, these are the attractions which have snatched from me the object of my love! This conduct is so cruelly despicable, so unworthy of him, that there are moments in which I cannot believe him guilty; but the reports which have been so generally propagated, which M. de Valois informed me of, which have even reached the Abbess of this convent; the billet, the fatal billet which I have read—all depose against him; his crime is but too well authenticated. However, I have sent a messenger to Paris, the gardener belonging to this house; he has obtained permission

under pretext of going to see his father, who is infirm and dying. He will inform himself of every thing. I expect him, I die with apprehension. His return will decide my fate. My hand trembles, the light forsakes my eyes. O my friend, I have only strength to bid you adieu. Without doubt an eternal adieu !

## LETTER CXVIII.

FROM MADAME DE \* \* \*, TO MADAME  
DE SENANGES.

Is it indeed from you ? Is it you who have written to me ? How precious are these characters ! Your hand has traced them : your soul breathes through them, mine dwells with rapture on them, I have bedewed them with my tears ; I deposit them in my bosom ; and never



would I wish to part with them from thence. Oh how well do you know me ! how justly do you judge of my heart ! Yes, I love, I esteem you more than ever. Acts of despotism and violence are proofs against the sensibility of men, but not against the virtue of women. Your letter has penetrated me with grief and admiration. What generosity in the reproaches you make yourself on the subject of M. de Senanges ! You pity him, and I approve of your doing so : but your virtue is his accuser, and it is Heaven that punishes him. But let us talk of the object so dear to you, whom you adore, whom you suspect, and who assuredly does not merit those suspicions. It is impossible that the Chevalier de Versenai can be thus dishonorable ; it is impossible that a miserable interest of ambition can debase his soul, unhumanize his nature ; people do not change thus. Be yourself

again; you are not betrayed, you are still beloved, you will ever be so. In solitude, the imagination is easily alarmed, and it is the character of misfortune to seize with more avidity subjects of discontent than motives of consolation. Believe me, the return of the messenger you have sent, will dissipate all your anxieties. I will be answerable for the Chevalier; as much as I formerly distrusted him, so much the more do I now esteem him. You are in a manner shut out from all nature : far from a society of which you were the delight, remote from a world in which you were looked up to as a model ! A barren soil, a bounded horizon, is all that now meets your view ! And the less your eyes can wander over space, the more you lose yourself in the vague of your own ideas. In the name of my tears, endeavour to call them home. Why cannot I myself fly to console you ! What prison ought

to be inaccessible to friendship? If mine is dear to you, receive the tenderest assurances of it: may it assuage your sufferings, lighten the pressure of your woes! What anguish do I feel for their existence! how much do I regret you! What a void have you left in my life! Where are now those conversations so tender, those effusions so sincere, which displayed mutually to us all the charms of confidence, all the treasures of friendship! When happiness is vanished, how bitter are its recollections! I am still in the country; I fear to return to Paris; I dread seeing again all those places which must remind me of you.—Adieu, my tender friend! I hope, I feel a presage that your afflictions will soon be terminated. The Chevalier, I again repeat, it, is not perfidious; I am certain of it: the phantom is only in your own imagination; your heart must combat it. If you can, write to me

again ; fear not to speak to me of your sufferings ; if I cannot cure, I shall have so much pleasure in participating in them !

## LETTER CXIX.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

RENE returns not ! You deign not even to assure me of your inconstancy. Ah ! the fatal blow is given. At this moment, whilst I write to you, whilst I shed tears of anguish, you are at the feet of your mistress : make an offering to her of my sorrows, of my life ; both will soon be ended. Yes, I am certain that you would see me expire rather than renounce her, and that you would receive my last sigh, only for the joy of bearing it to my rival. You will one

day weep the heart that you thus rend.  
 —No, shed no tears; never let them  
 flow for me; leave me to weep alone  
 the error which I still adore, the lover  
 whom I have so ill known, whom I  
 have too truly loved. That woman  
 whom you prefer to me, is doubtless  
 much more beautiful, but has she done  
 more for you than I have? Is it then  
 my misery which embellishes her in  
 your eyes? Do my torments ensure  
 her triumph? To owe to you all the  
 misfortunes which overwhelm me, is  
 this a cause you should abandon me?  
 I am far from upbraiding you with my  
 sacrifices. Hated, despised by an en-  
 tire universe, were I to expire in your  
 arms, were my lover but faithful, the  
 universe, the rage of a cruel husband,  
 opprobrium itself, nothing could prevent  
 my blessing my fate. Ah! since you  
 are not that susceptible being sought for  
 by this tenderest of hearts, why have I

known you? Was it only to diffuse anguish over my days that you rendered yourself adored? The friendship of some worthy characters, the esteem of all, that independence so dear to me, and sweet peace of mind, these were the treasures I should have preserved: however, in sacrificing all to you, say, what have I regretted? Sufferings, obloquy, danger, nothing restrained me: I knew no fear, but that of losing you. Since I have known you, have you ever been ignorant of any part of my conduct? Has any other idea than yours ever occupied my thoughts? How often, detesting the yoke of decorums and prejudices, of all which bound me, I have panted after a state the most obscure, how often wished to be unknown to the world, to attract the attention of none, but to inhabit a cottage, where, beholding, receiving no other guest but you, I should have been

but too blest !—Alas ! you have forgot all this ! How dreadful is my situation at this moment ! It is now three hours after midnight ; I am alone, and the terrifying stillness which reigns all around in this dreary abode, gives room for all the horrors of reflection : a gloomy dejection has taken place of the piercing anguish of my despairing soul ; I can distinguish nothing ; my eyes are fixed, and no longer take in objects ; no ideas dwell in my mind, and in my motionless frame it seems as if the pulse of life had ceased to throb : the lamp by which I write is nearly extinguished ; I shall soon be in total darkness. Why is it not that of the tomb ? Long since would my existence have terminated, could I have ceased to be, without ceasing to love you. My passion attached me to life, to misery : but it is time, great God, that thy mercy should deliver me from this burthensome and

detested existence! Early will my career be terminated, and I shall finish it with joy, if you live happy. Happy! and can you?—No, cruel man, hope it not. When I am no more, when you shall have lost the tenderest of friends, of mistresses, when the sleep of death shall have sealed these eyes, which opened only to behold you, when this heart shall have ceased to feel either love or wretchedness, you will then regret it, and seek for it in vain.—Adieu.

## LETTER CXX.

FROM DUMONT, TO MADAME DE  
SENANGES.

MADAME the Vicomtesse, it is by the orders of my master that I take the liberty to write to you: he is in so weak



a state, that it is impossible for him to hold a pen, or to make use of it. I had the imprudence this morning to tell him that René was here, and that he had been sent by you ; he ordered me to introduce him, and no sooner beheld him, than he uttered a loud exclamation of joy, and made a bound in his bed, as if he would have leaped out of it. René approached, and M. the Chevalier caught him in his arms, and held him for several minutes embraced. They both wept, and I am yet ready to weep too, only with the thoughts of it. René asked me if it was true that M. the Chevalier was going to be married. I assure you, Madame the Vicomtesse, he has never had any thoughts of it. During the whole time of his illness, my poor master's mind has been wholly employed about you ; in all his ravings he never pronounced any name but yours. I have not dared to deliver him your

letters, because I feared, Madame the Vicomtesse, it might occasion a relapse. He is not yet out of danger, and I would much rather die myself than lose him. I have not told him the cause of René's coming, lest it would agitate him too much. As soon as ever he will be able to read them, you may be assured, Madame the Vicomtesse, I will give him your letters. The appearance of René gave him so much pleasure, that he is much worse to day; but I hope, with the assistance of Heaven, that he will get better and better. In that hope, I have the honor to be,

Madame the Vicomtesse,

With the most profound respect,

Your very humble, &c.

LETTER CXXI.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

To what various extremes of misery is this heart doomed to be exposed ! how have I been able to survive them all ! You were ill, expiring—alas, perhaps you are still so ! and I suspected you of the most cruel of perfidies ! I experience only change of torments.—Must I ever tremble thus ? You who merit a mistress more confiding, you whom I have offended, receive my tears, my penitence ; I have expiated my injustice ; you have pardoned me, I know you have ; but do you believe I shall ever pardon myself ? I die, if I have not better news of you. Live, were it even to hate me, live for another, if it

must be so!—Better even to expire from your inconstancy than from your total loss! I am like an idiot, like a person deprived of reason.—This house of silence and of peace resounds with my groans and lamentations. Prostrate at the feet of its altars, I implore your restoration of a God whom I have too much forgotten. Can it be that he will be deaf to my prayers? I have deeply suffered; if his mercy sees fit, it is time I should now experience his goodness. Ah! did you know at what a moment your guilty mistress invokes him—only for you! M. de Senanges is at the last extremity. O Heaven! spare also this unhappy husband!—Let me be the only victim!

BILLET.

FROM M. DE SENANGES, TO MADAME  
DE SENANGES.

WHEN you receive this, perhaps I shall be no longer in existence. I bless my punishment; it terminates your sufferings. All your crime was that you could not love me; all my misery, the not being able to support your hatred. The violence of my transports was in proportion to your indifference; nature now justifies us both. It absolves me in delivering you from me. I summon all my remaining strength to render you this final justice. I employ my last efforts in soliciting your release from captivity. May these words, traced with my dying hand, depose against your tyrant, and serve as your apology!

All my vices proceeded from too great warmth of blood—death now freezes it—again I become virtuous.

## LETTER CXXII.

FROM THE CHEVALIER, TO MADAME  
DE SENANGES.

I UNFAITHFUL! You have allowed yourself to think so! you have given credit to what was written to you on that subject! ah! did you know me so ill? I confess to you I have been pressed to this marriage; I shuddered when it was proposed to me; and gave no other answer. Oh, God! could ambition thus have changed me! To run after a vain shadow of favor, I must have become guilty of the blackest ingratitude! I should have lost your heart, my own esteem, all that is dear

me, all that attaches me to life ! Cruel friend ! in reading over your letters, I felt as if the shades of death had again encompassed me : they contain not a word which I have not bathed with my tears. Thus then, innocent or guilty, I am ever the occasion of your torments ! Fate had half plunged me into my tomb, and I am restored to life to behold you dying of a suspicion—which you ought not to have formed, but which it was impossible for me to destroy !

Sole object of my thoughts, of all my wishes, of all my sentiments, your heart must avenge me of itself ! The blood which glows in these veins must cease to circulate, should you cease to love me ; must turn to ice, should you again suspect me.

During the whole course of my illness, your idea, your idea alone could charm my sufferings ; it seemed as if my soul

had yielded up my whole frame to malady, to give itself wholly to love. In the delirium which agitated me, it was you on whom I called, it was you whom I incessantly beheld : sometimes, I imagined I defended you against monsters ready to devour you ; sometimes, seated beneath the most delicious shades, I crowned you with flowers ; your virtue, less rigid, allowed itself to be in some degree disarmed at the voice of love ; I pressed you to my bosom ; my heart became intoxicated with joy ; I adored you, and I thus saved the purer part of myself from the approaches of destruction.

Heavens ! what have I read ? do my eyes deceive me ? have I understood aright what has been written to me ? M. de Senanges—is it true ? M. de Senanges is no more ! I sink beneath the transport !—You are then free.—Your pardon.—I dare say no more.



Where am I? is it the same world which I inhabit? How immense the barrier which has been thrown down before me! The darkness which surrounded me is dispersed, and lets me look forward.—But is it not a dream which deceives me? or rather, is not my malady returned, and I fallen again into that delirium in which I raved?—No; Heaven protects virtuous lovers.—No, it is no illusion.—Ought I to condole with you? Ought I—What would you have me do? I wander—The disorder of my senses—a sudden weakness—God of mercy! watch over my existence, this is not the moment to terminate it.

## LETTER CXXIII.

FROM MADAME DE SENANGES, TO THE  
CHEVALIER.

AGAIN I breathe !—I no longer tremble for your life.—Your second letter has assured me that all danger is past. You already know, and I repeat it to you with very sincere affliction, that death has terminated that of M. de Senanges. What a heart-rending letter have I received from him ! written just before he expired. The emotion it excited in me still remains. I cannot think of it without a tenderness of pity which I should hate myself did I not feel, and which I am incapable of concealing from you. How powerful are the ties of wedlock over souls of virtue ! Unfortunate man ! would I could recal him to life ! His

injurious rage only made me miserable ; his repentance renders me guilty. That letter in which he has cleared my conduct, that fatal and revered letter, oh ! yes, I have bathed it with my tears. Ah ! my friend, you will not condemn them. A lover such as you will cherish even those duties of which he is the victim.— I love you more than ever : my love has acquired strength from my miseries, from your danger and my alarms ; but I must repress it ; I must reject even the hopes of a happiness which would be embittered by a too well founded regret. Whilst M. de Senanges lived, I kept the promise I made him at the altar, that this person should be only his ; I will do more, I will respect his memory ; I will justify what he has latterly done for me. He employed his last painful moments to testify in favor of my innocence : I am free ; and I will not abuse that liberty. I shall quit this convent only to

enter into another: I will constantly write to you; I will permit you to answer me; but I must for some time deprive myself of the happiness of seeing you; I must tear myself from what I most love.—This last effort is the most painful of all; but propriety, honor command it, and it is your part to encourage me to it. Thy adventure has made much noise; it may have left some doubts as to my conduct; I will dissipate them all. If I take a still more particular care of my reputation even than I have ever done, it is because it interests you more than ever; it is because before I become yours, I would be irreproachable in the eyes of the whole world. I punish your love to ensure your esteem. During this voluntary separation, which I shall feel still more than you, your image will never vanish for an instant from my heart. I here make you the inviolable oath to

exist only for you, to think only of you, to look forward incessantly to that day when the most sacred of ties shall unite two hearts so well formed for each other; and worthy of their mutual felicity, from the extent of their sacrifices.

I yesterday received a letter from M. de Valois: he means to return immediately from the country, where he has been ever since I was taken from him; he depends upon finding me at his house in Paris, and anticipates the pleasure of embracing his niece. He will be disappointed in this hope, but I am sure he will applaud me for it. He informs me that Madame D'Ercy has just lost a lawsuit, which has deprived her of more than three-fourths of her income; he adds, that from the changes which have taken place in the ministry, she has entirely lost her interest at court. Ah, my friend, what a noble opportunity to avenge ourselves! Endeavour to be ser-

viceable to her in your turn. It is she who has been the cause of all our sufferings; it was she who, in the last instance, from the slightest grounds, expressly circulated the report of your pretended marriage. That billet, that fatal billet, which I believed had given me my death wound, could you believe such malignity existed? it was concerted between the nun who shewed it me, and her. That nun is a young lady of quality, whom, she seduced by the hopes of an abbage, and by persuading her that it was a work of piety to endeavour by that means to cure me of my passion for you. After so many atrocities, Madame D'Ercy well deserves that we should make her blush by our benefits.

Adieu, most amiable, and most beloved of men. I depend upon your courage. My tenderness itself is a pledge to you of mine.

P. S —Let us not forget the worthy René, his interest will be ever dear to me. How do I long to see him placed in a situation of ease and happiness ! \*

## LETTER CXXIV.

FROM THE MARQUIS DE VERSENAI, TO  
THE BARON.

I AM the happiest of men, my dear Baron ! we are united ; she is all my own !—Mortal organs suffice not for my transports ; conceive their excess.—Yesterday Heaven received the mutual vow. That solemn vow, so formidable to many, but so fraught with happiness to us ; our hearts had made it long before our lips pronounced the sweetly irrevocable con-

\* An entire year must be supposed to have passed between the dates of this letter and the following one.

tract. How at once awful and smiling did the ceremony appear to me ! As our misfortunes had been public, all were of course interested in their termination. What was in reality only a festival for Madame de Versenai and me, seemed to be so to every spectator. I heard echoed from all sides : " How beautiful she is ! how vast is his happiness !" I fixed my eyes beaming with love upon her ; hers cast down with the sweetest modesty, let escape, however, some rays of the purest joy. Her emotion still more embellished her charms. How delicious to me thus to avow my felicity to an applauding world, and to see my choice justified by the universal suffrage ! O my respectable friend ! you have been the witness, the confident of all our sufferings ; participate too in our joys. Those beings so dear to you, so long the sport of tempests, so often on the point of perishing, have at length gained the shore. We



are now at the house of M. de Valois : his niece will never more be separated from him. You, my dear Baron, will I am sure with pleasure receive us all. In eight days we shall set out to visit you. My wife, my mistress, she whom I more than ever idolize, will introduce to you her friend who accompanies us, and we shall pass some of the most charming months of the year with you. Prepare your arbours to receive my bride ; let your shrubberies assume their gayest liveries, and exhale their richest perfumes to greet her. I shall present you, in her single person, virtue, the graces, love, and friendship.

FINIS.

## BOOKS

PUBLISHED BY J. F. HUGHES,

No. 15, Paternoster-row.

---

*The Mysterious Florentine;*

A Romance, in 4 Vols. By Caroline Sinclair.

---

*The Libertine Husband;*

A Novel, in 2 Vols. By the popular author  
of "Corinna," &c. &c.

---

*The Discarded Daughter;*

A Novel, in 4 Vols. By Eugenia De Acton,  
author of the "Essays on the Art of being  
Happy," &c. &c.

*Just published by J. F. Hughes.*

---

*The Castilian Lady and Norman Knight ;*  
A Romance, in 2 Vols.

---

*Yorkshire Characters ;*  
A Novel, in 3 Vols.

---

*Julia Fitz-Clarence ;*  
A Novel, in 3 Vols.

---

*The Earl of Desmond ;*  
An interesting Irish Story, in 3 Vols.

---

*Castle of Vivaldi, or, The Mysterious  
Injunction ;*  
A Romance, in 4 Vols.

*Just published by J. F. Hughes.*

---

*Matilda Montford;*  
A Romantic Novel, in 4 Vols.

---

*Caroline of Lichtfeld;*  
A New Edition, in 3 Vols.

---

*The Convent of Grey Penitents;*  
An interesting Romance, in 2 Vols.

---

*The Exile of Portugal;*  
A very interesting Novel, in 2 Vols. by the  
author of "Ludovico's Tales," &c.

---

*Gothic Legends, or, Legendary Tales;*  
A Romance, in 2 Vols.

